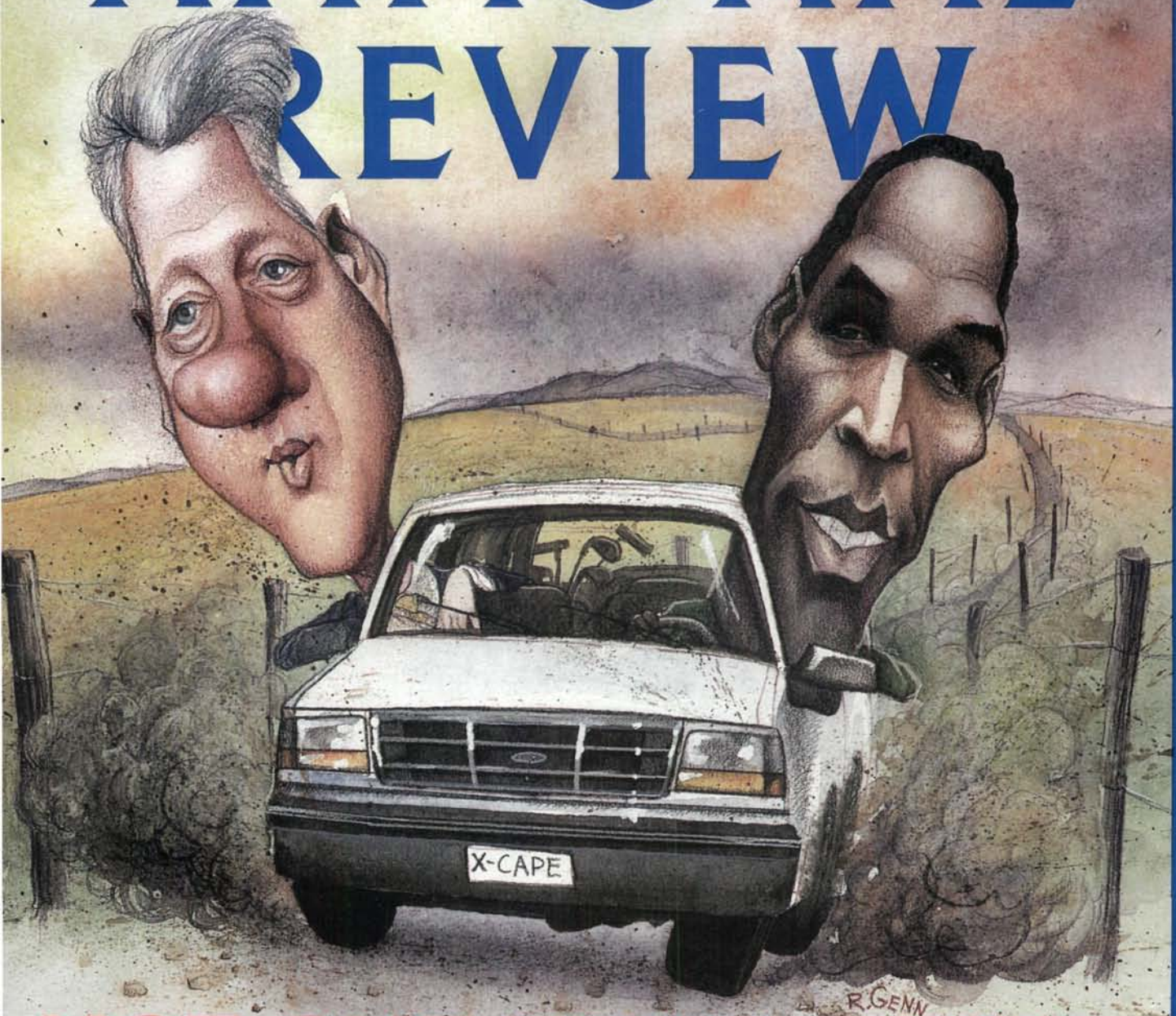
October 26, 1998 49145 $3.50 U.S., $4.50 Canadian

SPECIAL ELECTION COVERAGE: *Novak* on Bob Kerrey • *Gedmin* on Gerhard Schröder
Brookhiser on Al D'Amato • *Miller* on the Battle for the House

NATIONAL REVIEW



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How the culture of lying & l...

John O. McGinnis

...

John O'Sullivan

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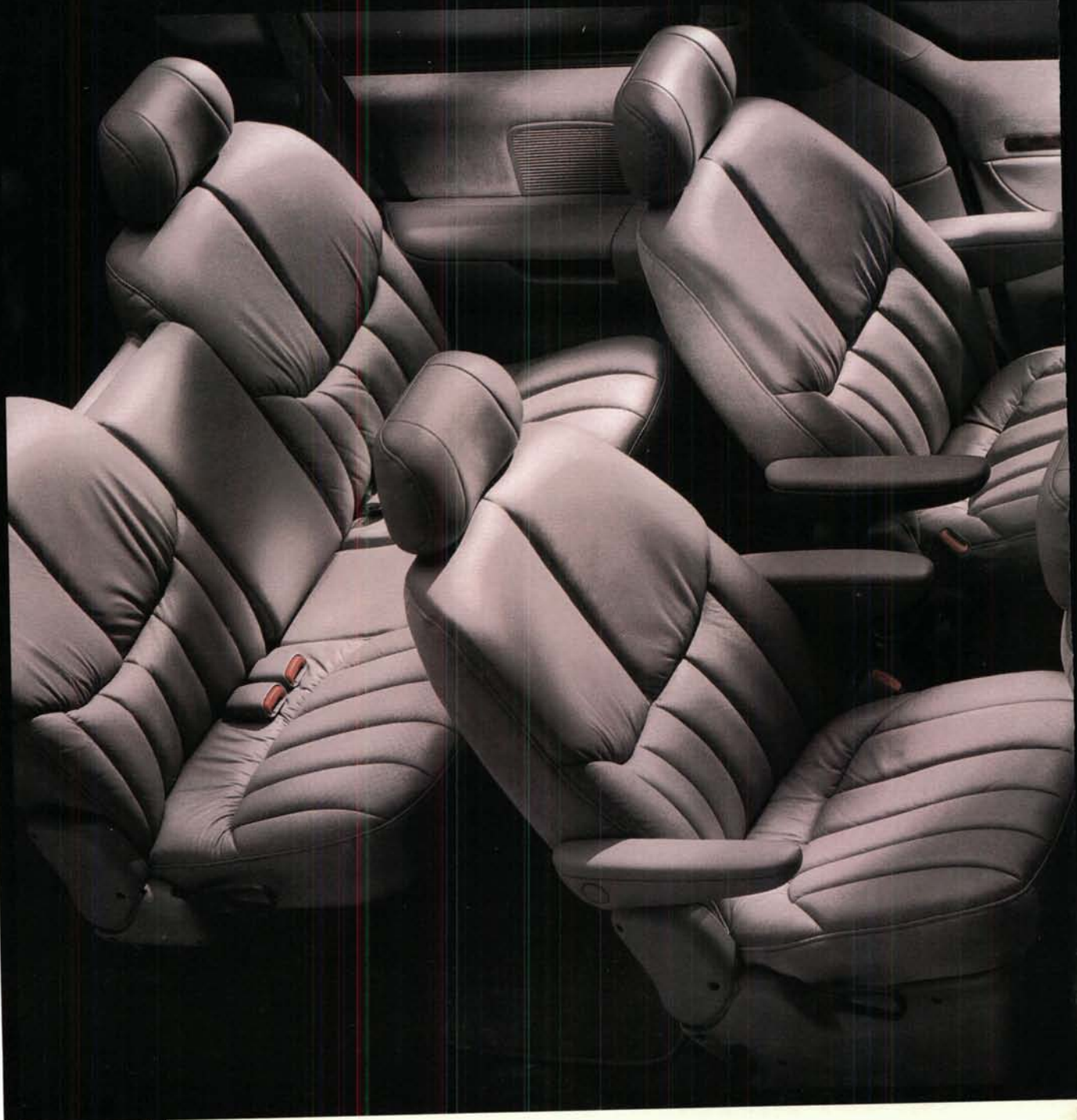

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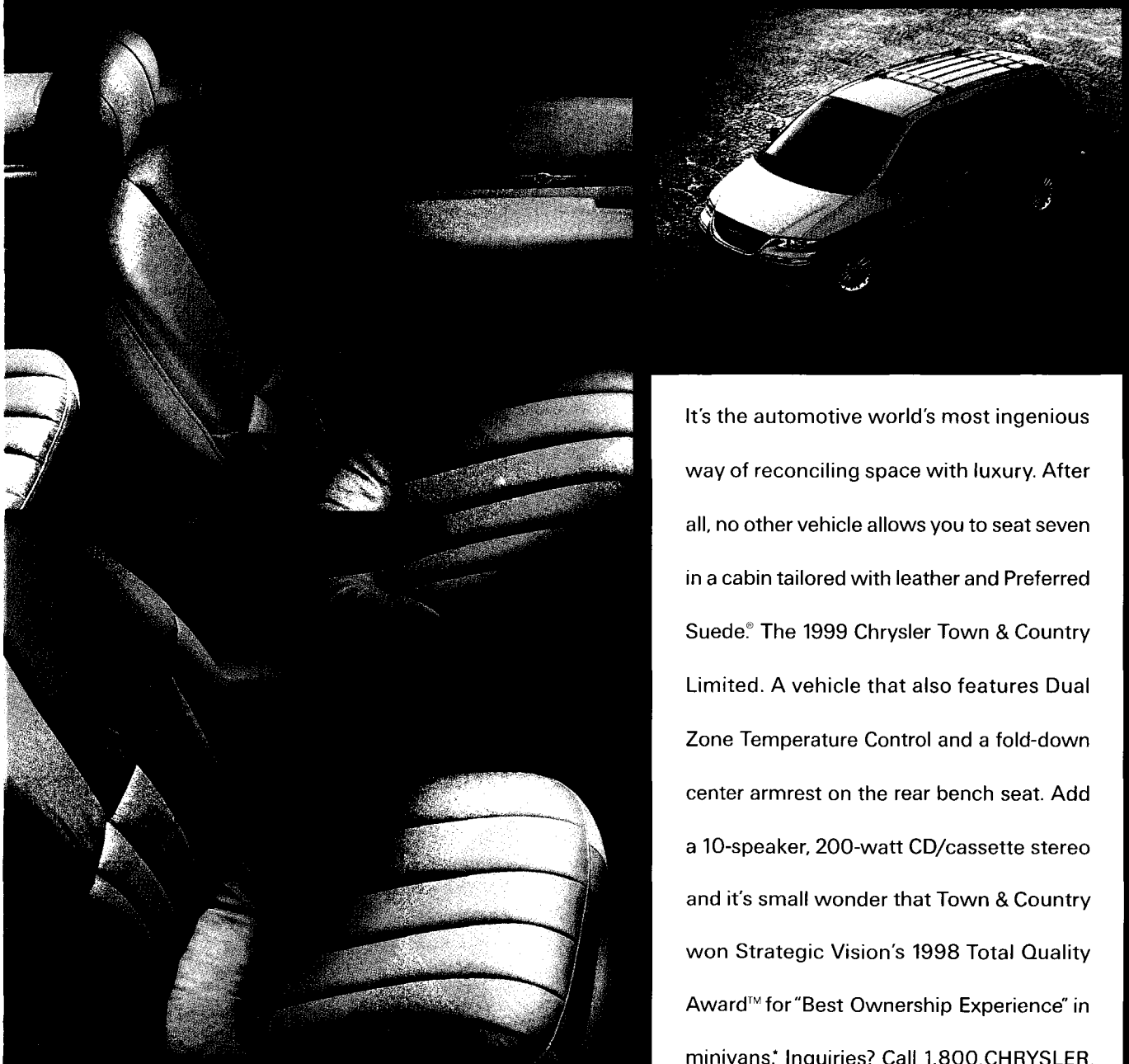

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NATIONAL REVIEW

OCTOBER 26, 1998 VOL. L, NO. 20

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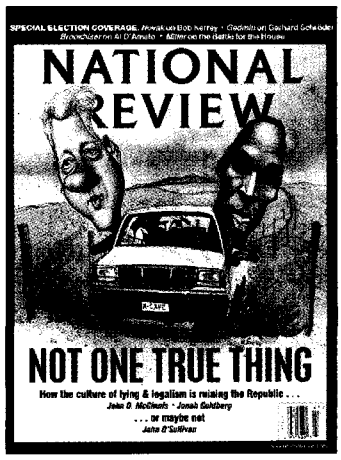

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LETTERS

A Questionable Legacy

Your comments concerning the despicable behavior of the current President are well founded and convincing. But I have a problem with your pejorative references to Richard M. Nixon. One of your opinion pieces even placed Nixon in the same category as Aaron Burr and Benedict Arnold ["The Week," Sept. 14].

Before his Presidency, RMN did honorable service in the Navy during World War II, and he served in the House, in the Senate, and as Vice President. He was at the forefront of anti-Communism when it was not fashionable. I still remember his risking his life in the anti-American riots in Venezuela, on a visit there during the Eisenhower Presidency. He fell from grace when he tried, incorrectly or not, to assist associates involved with the Watergate break-in. Yet to put his legacy on the same footing as Clinton's shows at best a lack of perspective or, at worst, closet liberalism permeating NATIONAL REVIEW.

William Kamenel
Ocean Township, N.J.

James J. Kilpatrick's defense of Bill Clinton's lies is instructive ["U.S. *v.* Clinton," Sept. 28], but his comparison to Richard Nixon is insufficient. The lies of Clinton and Nixon are equivalent, because they were both made to cover activities and circumvent judicial process. The only difference that may be drawn between lies is one of intent, but since neither Clinton's nor Nixon's lies were meant to preserve national security, protect the lives of Americans abroad, or further any other valid purpose, this comparison is not relevant. Both men's lies were perpetuated to help them hold onto a power they had abused.

Ken Klawonn
Charlotte, N.C.

Crying Foul

Jon Sanders has obviously never confronted a hate crime ["Hoax Crimes," Sept. 14]. His leap from pointing out a few isolated examples of falsely reported hate crimes, to a grand-scale indictment of university officials who he claims will stop at nothing to promote their agenda, is unwarranted and off the mark. A few examples of hate-crime hoaxes do not demonstrate a "trend" among students, faculty, and administrators, to promote "the urgency of their multicultural agenda." Sanders's expansive conclusion leaves one with the false impression that the practice of staging such crimes is pervasive.

Hundreds of hate crimes and atrocities, such as the brutal killing this summer of James Byrd Jr. in Jasper, Texas, destroy lives and tear communities apart each year. Sanders's treatment ignores this essential context, thereby serving to diminish the great strides made, via hate-crimes legislation and education, toward eradicating a truly horrifying form of violence.

Abraham H. Foxman
National Director
Anti-Defamation League
New York, N.Y.

Ad Hominem

The obnoxious and untalented John Simon seems to get more offensive with each article. In his blast at *Your Friends & Neighbors* [Sept. 14] he states that Ben Stiller "is in movies because he is the son of the famous comedy team Jerry Stiller and Anne Meara," and that Nicholas Cage is "in movies because he is the nephew of Francis Ford Coppola." I seem to recall a similar accusation leveled at Wallace Shawn back in poor old *Vanya on 42nd Street*—supposedly, his career resulted from his being the son of the editor of *The New Yorker* (??!!!). In no case does Simon attempt to support these gratuitous and irrelevant assertions, which generally have nothing to do with the specific performances or films he is attacking.

Steven Zumbrun
Baltimore, Md.

Imperial Court

In your September 28 issue I read a letter from Distinguished Fellow Harry V. Jaffa, taking issue with Robert George and Ramesh Ponnuru's accusations of judicial imperialism in the Supreme Court ["Courting Disaster," Aug. 17]. In part of his argument Mr. Jaffa refers to "the equal-protection clause of the Fifth Amendment." The fact of the matter is, however, that the Fifth Amendment contains no "equal-protection clause." In the 1954 case of *Bolling* v. *Sharpe*, the Warren Court, in its dubious wisdom, thought it a good idea to have one, and declared it to be so. That decision, among many others, is a stunning example of "judicial imperialism."

Eric L. Grahame
Chicago, Ill.

No Disrespect

Al Sharpton is treated with respect, which leads Richard Lowry to conclude "that a weakened Democratic Party is losing its antibodies" ["Disrespecting Sharpton," Sept. 14]. Losing? When Sharpton ran for the Senate from New York in 1992, none of his primary opponents mentioned that, during the Crown Heights riots of 1991, he had actually accused the Jews of funding apartheid.

Five years later when Sharpton ran for mayor of New York City, his opponents in the Democratic primary failed to question his participation in the demonstrations against Freddy's clothing store in Harlem —demonstrations that were followed by a fire on December 8, 1995, in which seven people died. Sharpton's reckless opposition to the existence of a white-owned store on 125th Street, and the ensuing tragedy, should have ended his political career. Let us all join Mr. Lowry in disrespecting Sharpton—and his opponents in the Democratic primaries.

George Jochnowitz
Professor of Linguistics
The City University of New York
Staten Island, N.Y.

Fool's Gold

If "Golden Boy" Dan Lungren is as good as it gets [Sept. 14], conservatives are in for a rough ride. The chief busybody for the state that gave the Left Coast its name may think he has reached a "sensible middle ground" on the Second Amendment. Perhaps he thinks that one free speech a month is a sensible middle ground for the First Amendment.

David Crocco
Speedway, Ind.

Songs for the Nineties

Miss Florence King's admirers may be glad to know that a delightful collection of Gay Nineties songs, including many of those quoted by Miss King [Sept. 28], is available on CD. The recording is entitled *After the Ball* (WEA/Elektra/Nonesuch, catalogue #79148). The songs are performed by Joanue Morris, mezzo, accompanied by William Bolcom.

Susan Combs
New York, N.Y.

When a Cigar . . . Is Just a Cigar

Was the placement of the ad for Dunhill Honduran Cigars on the back cover of the September 28 issue an accident? Its proximity to Florence King's delightful "Ballad of Monica Lewinsky" is too droll to let pass unremarked. Whether by chance or plan, the timing was exquisite.

Ed McBride
Milwaukie, Ore.

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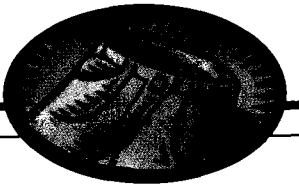

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FROM THE EDITOR

All Apologies

PRESIDENT Clinton famously went on an apology tour after his August 17 rendition was found wanting. So, increasingly direct apologies for Monicagate were added to the President's many other mea culpas—for the West's role in oppressing Africa, for raising taxes too much, etc., etc.

But Clinton and his defenders—from the White House spin squad to the feminists—haven't covered all the bases yet. Not since the Gulf War has a political battle in Washington so quickly and thoroughly discredited one side of an argument and vindicated another.

Here is a partial listing, and suggested language, for the abject apologies that are still owed.

Elliott Abrams. You were right when you argued that the independent-counsel law had "criminalized policy differences" in Washington. Sorry we scoffed at you at the time.

Justice Antonin Scalia. We're sorry we didn't recognize you as an authority on the independent-counsel law much earlier. As *Washington Post* columnist Richard Cohen recently put it, your prescience about the counsel statute sets "the brain to recalling this or that column, written under differing circumstances, questioning the man's judgment." Who knows? You may turn out to be right about the Commerce Clause too.

Kenneth Starr. Hey, sorry about the Nazi comparisons. And "sex-obsessed" was a bit rich too, not to mention "out-of-control." But it's all part of being "in the arena," right? Under the independent-counsel statute, which we now all agree is rotten law, you didn't have any *choice* but to investigate the President. Sorry, again . . .

Ed Meese. So, "pig" was a little strong. You conducted yourself with remarkable restraint and dignity under an extensive independent-counsel investigation. And you too were right about the counsel statute all along. Could you do us a favor and work on Attorney General Reno?

Bob Packwood. We called *you* a misogynist? Your moves look positively smooth in comparison to the President's. And you didn't even lie to your diary—what integrity!

Jackie Judd. Well, you were right about the dress all along, even as you were pilloried as the embodiment of journalistic irresponsibility by self-righteous "watchdogs." Steven Brill will be giving you a call.

Wall Street Journal. You got the steward story right. Sorry.

Matt Drudge. This hurts—but you were right about every major scandal story: from the initial story to the dress to Easter Sunday, and on and on. Can we ever make it up to you?

David Brock. Your Troopergate story best captured the way Bill Clinton operates, bending the machinery of government to his private desires. You've been apologizing for that story, but instead we should be apologizing to you for giving you all that grief at the time.

Bob Dole. What was that you were saying about outrage?

Jerry Brown. What was that you were saying about Hillary Clinton's character?

Henry Cisneros. It was only a lie about sex? And you had to resign? Life just isn't fair.

Richard Nixon. Maybe we should have been more understanding.

The Tailhook pilots. Cavorting with strippers never looked so innocent. Next time try partying in the Oval Office. Sorry about ruining your careers.

Kathleen Willey's cat. We feel your pain.

Gennifer Flowers. Maybe if you had preserved DNA on a dress we would have believed you. Well, live and learn. Sorry.

Paula Jones. We called you names and said your story didn't ring true—just not Bill Clinton's style. Ooops. Actually, it turns out you're lucky he was as well-mannered as he was. Maybe $700,000 will make up for it?

Justice Clarence Thomas. What can we say?

—RICHARD LOWRY

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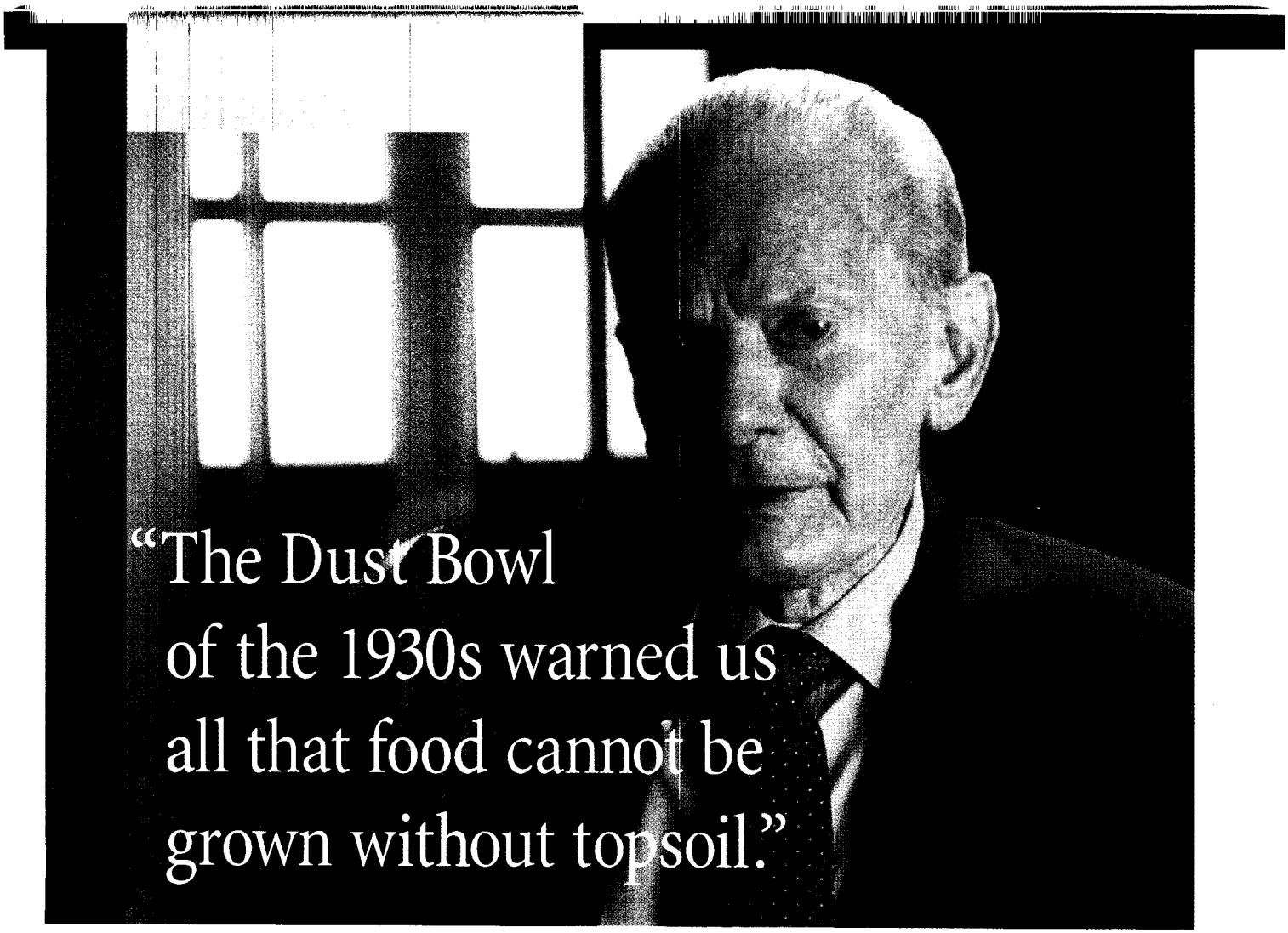

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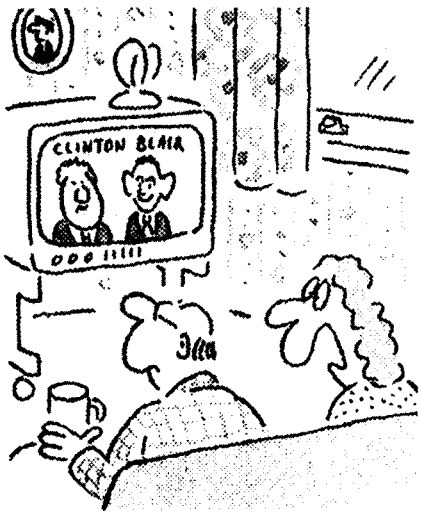
FOR THE RECORD

■ Rep. **Lindsey Graham** (R., S.C.), on Judiciary Committee, declares perjury in civil suit is not impeachable. He wins newfound respect from *New York Times*, but GOP colleagues identify him as weak link. . . . ABC/*Washington Post* poll: 54 per cent of likely voters think **Bill Clinton** should resign. . . . Rep. **John Boehner** (R., Ohio): "Do you realize the President this year has had exactly two Cabinet meetings? One to bring his Cabinet in January to tell them that he didn't have sex with that woman and then he brought them back in back in August to say, 'Well, I'm sorry I lied to you when we met the last time.'" . . . On Nov. 3, 1989, Sen. **Tom Daschle** (D., S.D.), now Minority Leader, voted to impeach Federal Judge **Walter Nixon**: "This morning we impeached a judge from Mississippi for failing to tell the truth. Those decisions are always very difficult and certainly, in this case, it came after a great deal of concern and thoughtful analysis of the facts." . . . X-rated movie-maker **David Schlesinger** in *TV Guide*, on why pornographers won't film a Clinton scandal parody: "It would be a funny movie, but President Clinton is a total supporter of the industry and he's always been on our team."

■ Magic number for Senate Republicans is net gain of 5 seats, which would provide filibuster-proof majority of 60. Sens. **Carol Moseley-Braun** (D., Ill.) and **Barbara Boxer** (D., Calif.) look like losers in November. Republicans also hoping to grab Senate seats in Kentucky, Nevada, Ohio, South Carolina, Wisconsin. Indiana Democrat **Evan Bayh** certain to capture seat left open by retiring Sen. **Dan Coats** (R.). Democrats also have eye on GOP incumbents in New York and North Carolina. . . . In House, Democrats scramble to save worried incumbents **Leonard Boswell** (Iowa), **Lane Evans** (Ill.), **Jay Johnson** (Wisc.), **James Maloney** (Conn.), **John Tierney** (Mass.), **Ted Strickland** (Ohio). GOP likely to win some or all of these races.

■ Maryland Gov. **Parris Glendening** (D.) wins only 68 per cent of September primary vote even though main challenger, **Eileen Rehrmann**, dropped out of race. Rehrmann backs conservative Republican **Ellen Sauerbrey**, and race looks like a squeaker. . . . Republicans currently occupy governor's mansion in 8 of 10 biggest states; they could lose California but look like winners in Florida and maybe Georgia. . . . As **Geoffrey Feiger**'s gubernatorial campaign flames out, other Michigan Democrats feel heat. Rep. **Sander Levin** and Minority Whip **David Bonior** in tough races. Bonior's district often votes GOP in higher-level elections. Now pro-lifers have abandoned Bonior for **Brian Palmer** (R.), and Bonior refuses to talk to Detroit's two major daily newspapers because he sides with unions in nasty labor dispute.

■ California and other states' moving 2000 primary up to March 7 is likely to benefit candidates who can raise huge amounts on short notice, especially **George W. Bush** and **Steve Forbes**. . . . Ex-S.C. Gov. **Carroll Campbell** likely to back **Dan Quayle** in 2000, while current Gov. **David Beasley** thought to favor Bush. . . . Christian Coalition cancels presidential straw poll at annual convention because leaders fear **Pat Robertson**'s favorite, Sen. **John Ashcroft** (R., Mo.), might not win convincingly—or at all. . . . In bold move, even given venue, Quayle's speech at Coalition convention focuses entirely on abortion. He becomes first major Republican to notice that federal courts are declaring a right to partial-birth abortion, and promises pro-life Supreme Court Justices: "We need more Justices like **Antonin Scalia** and **Clarence Thomas**—and no more ringers." . . . Ex-Postmaster General **Marvin Runyon** joins **Lamar Alexander** campaign. "There is not a more skilled and effective manager in the country today," says Alexander of man formerly responsible for mail delivery.



Matt-Rotheo

"Remind me, is our relationship with America special or inappropriate?"

■ Third-quarter ratings soar for all-news cable channels CNN, CNBC, MSNBC, and Fox, thanks to Clinton scandal. . . . Center for Media and Public Affairs counts 1,138 late-night jokes about Clinton so far in 1998, putting him on track to double previous record set by **Bob Dole** in 1996. . . . Feminists **Betty Friedan** and **Patricia Ireland** call on GOP to stop efforts to investigate Clinton. Record of this Congress has been "an unmitigated disaster for women," they write in statement. . . . **Stephen King**: "**Ken Starr** is an odious little man who is trying to justify all the money that he's spent by finding *anything* that's dirty on this guy. . . . They didn't catch Clinton with a 9-year-old, did they?" . . . Popularity of name "**Monica**" drops 18 per cent among new New Jersey parents. . . . **Alveda King**, niece of **Martin Luther King Jr.**, formally joins GOP.

■ In Rio de Janeiro, 13-member Pranksters Fraternity toasts Clinton with cigars and bourbon outside U.S. Consulate on National Secretary's Day. . . . Crime in Russian armed forces rises 12 per cent. . . . Spanish parliament defeats by one vote legislation that would have provided abortion on demand for first 12 weeks of pregnancy. . . . Clinton Administration readies 300,000-metric-ton wheat shipment to North Korea despite Pyongyang's missile tests over Japan and suspicions it is still working on nuclear-weapons program. . . . *British Medical Journal* publishes study establishing that doctors do indeed have sloppier handwriting.

■ At fundraiser, Sen. **Ted Kennedy** mangles names of home-run kings, calling Clinton-**Gore** the "**Mike McGwire**" and "**Sammy Sooser**" of politics.

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THE WEEK

■ Does all this mean Joycelyn Elders gets her job back?

■ How about Pee Wee Herman?

■ Joe Camel?

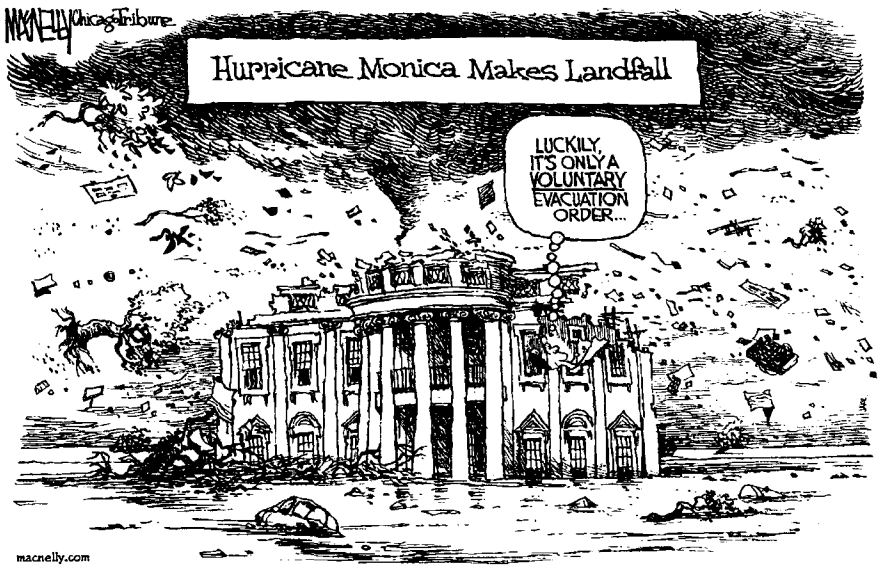
■ The Democrats' proposal for a deadline for the House impeachment inquiry was unreasonable—why help them stonewall?—but the suggested time frame is not. If the House can't complete its inquiry by Thanksgiving, it should be able to come close. Its role, after all, is not to judge the President's guilt or innocence, but to determine whether the evidence of impeachable offenses is sufficient for it to hand the matter over to the Senate—just like a grand jury handing up an indictment. Ken Starr has already done most of the House's work. So it should follow the usual procedure: act, and leave the dawdling to the Senate.

■ But proceeding with all deliberate speed shouldn't mean jettisoning parts of Starr's case prematurely. It is conventional wisdom in Washington that the weakest count against the President is that he abused his power by (unsuccessfully) invoking executive and other privileges. The President should not be punished just for defending himself, goes the argument. But executive privilege exists solely to serve a public purpose, and to claim it in order to cover up personal wrongdoing is, perforce, to abuse the public trust. That's why Richard Nixon's claim of executive privilege was in the counts of impeachment against him, and why this count is one of the more damning ones against Bill Clinton.

■ The President said in his grand-jury testimony that he was "set up" by Linda Tripp, the Paula Jones lawyers, and presumably other members of the right-wing fifth column. First, Paula Jones's lawyers were told about things that Bill Clinton thought were secret—primarily that he had continued to solicit oral sex from subordinates. Second, Ken Starr was supposedly tipped off about Monica Lewinsky a week in advance through a highly implausible series of machinations by book agent Lucianne Goldberg and some shadowy lawyers. Even if this is true, so what? Ken Starr didn't move until Linda Tripp called with her tapes. And neither Mr. Starr nor Mrs. Tripp induced or encouraged Bill Clinton to commit crimes (which would have been entrapment); they simply tried to reveal those crimes. Nobody forced Mr. Clinton to perjure himself again on August 17. It's all too human to think it "unfair" when we get caught; but that doesn't make it so. Clinton entrapped himself.

■ First Betty Currie was the innocent, the church-going secretary cowed by the media pack outside the federal courthouse. Now she's the victim, ensnared in the President's tawdry schemes. But it seems more and more likely that Betty Currie was something else all along: an accessory to a crime. President Clinton feared the "adults" in the White House, but he knew he could trust Mrs. Currie to facilitate his "ministering" sessions with Monica, then to work with the ex-intern to keep evidence from Paula Jones's lawyers, and finally to stand by his cover story when testifying before the grand jury. "My memory is getting worse by the minute," she maintained. The press doesn't like the idea of a villain who is also a black woman. But this is an equal-opportunity scandal.

■ President Clinton's lawyers, looking for allies, have discovered Alexander Hamilton. In 1792, the first Treasury Secretary was approached by three hostile congressmen who accused him of insider trading with a small-time crook named James Reynolds. Hamilton admitted that he had been paying blackmail, but for quite another reason: he and Mrs. Reynolds had been having an affair. The congressmen let the matter drop, and Hamilton served five more years at the highest levels of government, from which the Clintonites infer that the Founders shared Bill's view of sex (or "sex"). But 1) Mrs. Reynolds was not Hamilton's employee. 2) When a garbled account appeared in the press, Hamilton did not consult his legal team; he published the full story, including love and blackmail letters. 3) Hamilton never lied about the affair under oath, or encouraged others to do so. The Founders took perjury seriously. Washington's Farewell Address warned that there would be no "security" for property or reputation if "the oaths which are the



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■ HOUSEKEEPING NOTES: Next issue brings *NR*'s redesign—nothing radical, just a cleaner, livelier look. . . . Hits on *NR*'s website increased 189 per cent in August and another 83 per cent in September. Check out www.nationalreview.com for daily updates from Washington and other special features you can't find in the magazine, or anywhere else.

instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice" were flouted. The main author of the Farewell Address was Alexander Hamilton. Back to James Carville.

■ There are just two problems with Bill Clinton's claim that he balanced the budget: 1) the budget isn't really balanced; and 2) Mr. Clinton shut down the government twice to prevent the "balanced budget" he now boasts about. An honest accounting would exclude the $120-billion Social Security surplus from the general budget. This would reveal that the Federal Government is still $50 billion in the red. Any progress in reducing the deficit has been in spite of Mr. Clinton's policies. Two years after his 1993 tax hike, the outlook was for $200-billion deficits as far as the eye could see. What changed? A Republican Congress and a booming economy. During the height of the budget wars in 1995, Bill Clinton had to go back to the drawing board not once, not twice, but five times until he finally proposed a balanced budget. In the summer of 1995, the Clinton Administration conceded the obvious by announcing that balancing the budget is "not one of our top priorities." It became one only after it happened.

■ In an unusually bitter hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Joint Chiefs finally began to acknowledge the precipitous decline in the military's combat readiness. Several senators, notably John McCain and Bob Smith, scolded the chiefs for fudging the issue over the past few years and then coming to the Hill too late to affect next year's budget. Apart from Marine Commandant Charles Krulak, the only one in the bunch who had always been frank, the chiefs hung their heads and ventured some lame excuses. But they are not the only ones who have been AWOL. The President has been content to let Secretary of State Madeleine Albright declare wars the Administration has neither a plan to fight nor the stomach to win (against Iraq, Serbia, North Korea, terrorism, etc.). Secretary of Defense William Cohen has presided over a defense program that has declined for 14 years running and is underfunded by somewhere between $25 and $40 billion a year. No profiles in courage here.

Hello? Deus ex Machina?

Are you part of this production
Or some diva gone to pot?
I've been chewing Clinton's playbill,
And my transverse colon's shot.
Don't just hang there, send a signal!
Dow 6000 would be fine.
I'll do sacrifices daily
At your designated shrine.

—W. H. VON DREELE

■ Dan Lungren has not lost the election for governor of California yet, but it's not for want of trying. His law-and-order theme is not working against Democrat Gray Davis, who is opportunistically saying that Singapore's crime policies are a "starting point." Lungren points out that Davis used to work for Jerry Brown, but that's ancient history. Nor are voters likely to accept Lungren's implicit attempt to link Davis, a veteran, to Bill Clinton. Lungren is responding to Davis's attacks on the abortion issue by explaining that he is a devout Catholic—as if his pro-life position were some sectarian idiosyncrasy. Meanwhile his messageless campaign leaves voters unaware of his excellent record on issues other than crime. The polls show him near Davis, and he still has time to right himself. If he goes down, the defeat will be blamed on his conservatism, and especially on the abortion issue. But political incompetence transcends ideology.

■ Gov. Pete Wilson signed a bill moving California's presidential primary to the beginning of March, and Gov. Christine Todd Whitman wants New Jersey to follow suit. As we have noted before, compressing the primary schedule even further is likely to increase the importance of money, media attention, and the support of the party establishment. No doubt some Republicans also have something more mischievous in mind: creating a bi-coastal primary favoring party liberals. The left wing of the GOP is getting smarter—and stealthier.

■ President Clinton lifted nary a finger to win the authority to negotiate trade agreements, a/k/a "fast track," which consequently lost—with 71 Republicans voting against free trade. Pat Buchanan gloats that Republican free-traders are retiring from Congress, while younger members lean toward protectionism. That's right: their elders remember the last time the world embraced protectionism amid deflation, attacks on "speculators," and an international crisis. The latest act in this replay of the Thirties has the steel lobby demanding protection from its Asian and Brazilian competitors. Rarely do Congress and the regulators get such an opportunity: they can simultaneously wallop American steel-using industries, make it harder for struggling countries to repay their debts to us, and start a trade war. And unlike trade, with this deal you get nothing in return. Even Mr. Buchanan concedes that when steel got protection in the Eighties, it used the windfall to upgrade technology and lay off

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workers—whose livelihoods are the supposed point of the exercise.

■ Two federal courts have now ruled against the Clinton Administration's unconstitutional plan to use statistical sampling in the 2000 Census for the purpose of congressional apportionment. Yet the White House is forging ahead with the plan on the specious grounds that these findings are under Supreme Court review. If, as expected, the Court upholds the rulings, Commerce Department officials have indicated that they will use sampling anyway for redistricting and federal aid—everything, that is, except determining how many congressmen each state will get. Until they can get away with that too.

■ Iran's foreign minister, after meeting with his British counterpart at the UN, declared that the Iranian government dissociated itself from the Ayatollah Khomeini's 1989 *fatwa* (death sentence) against author Salman Rushdie. Whereupon the British government declared victory, restored full diplomatic relations with Teheran, and took its place in line for lucrative oil and gas contracts. On closer inspection, however, the Iranian declaration was nothing new—as indeed the foreign minister reminded his compatriots over state radio and television when he got home. Distancing itself from the *fatwa* has been the Iranian government's position ever since Khomeini's death (which has not prevented various plots against Rushdie, intercepted by Scotland Yard). A *fatwa* is a clerical edict; only clerics can lift it, and they have no intention of doing so. Any young bloods eager to earn the $2.5-million bounty (put up by a religious foundation) are still free to do so. Heads up, Salman.

■ The Council on Families reports that most American high-school textbooks that discuss marriage and love treat such matters as "health" issues: "these textbooks convey to students an image of marriage and family life that is radically uninspiring." It is no accident that marriage and love have been categorized as health issues: this is the basis on which the schools took over this territory from parents in the first place. The solution to uninspiring school instruction on sex, love, and marriage is not, as some conservative commentators have suggested, to make it inspiring. It never can be, coming from teachers who care very little about a child's religious background and his parents' hopes. Instead of tinkering with a program that was flawed from the start, we should take away the schools' authority to discuss such intimate matters in the classroom. Perhaps they could teach math instead.

■ After her 19-year-old son shot himself playing Russian roulette, 38-year-old Pamela Reno, a cocktail waitress in Nevada, could not bear to let him die without the possibility of her becoming a grandmother. So she took his sperm and froze them. Jeremy has since died, and Mom/Grandma waits for an egg donor. Miss Reno's promise: "I'm going to have Jeremy's picture on the wall, and I'm going to tell the child, 'That's Daddy.'" Well, that should clear up any confusion.

■ Looking at the field for 2000, a coven of feminists wonders, Why not elect a woman? Because Lady Thatcher is not a natural-born citizen, obviously.

■ The tab for all Clinton investigations, including Starr's, is approaching $100 million, writes Marshall H. Tanick in *The National Law Journal*. "Just think: a plaintiff's attorney in the tobacco litigation would have to work close to a week, with short lunch breaks, to earn that much."

■ A compromise *NR* can support: impeachment for Bill Clinton, censure for Orrin Hatch.

Paradigm Lost

THE Clintons joined British prime minister Tony Blair and assorted left-wing notables at a New York seminar on the Third Way. Perhaps Mr. Clinton saw it, in the present discouraging circumstances, as his best ticket to History. After all, as Professor Anthony Giddens, the director of the London School of Economics and the author of a widely mocked book on the subject, had declared: "The Third Way agenda, to which Bill and Hillary Clinton have made a fundamental contribution, is the new agenda for our time. Third Way politics will dominate the next twenty to thirty years . . . We are talking about a very fundamental paradigm shift in politics here today."

If Professor Giddens, President Clinton, and Prime Minister Blair were better informed about the history of Third Way politics, they might be less confident. An earlier version of the Third Way was fascism—supposedly a halfway house between the anarchy of capitalism and the prison-house of socialism. This was followed by the corporatism of Catholic social policy which is now seen as the root of Europe's unemployment and sluggishness. The third Third Way was the attempt by Eastern Euro-

History's Little Lessons

Before the start of World War I,
When L'Heure Bleue was the scent,
Von Schlieffen had a battle plan,
And everywhere he went
He'd caution, "Keep zuh right wing schtrong."
When anglicized, it draws a throng.

—W. H. von Dreele

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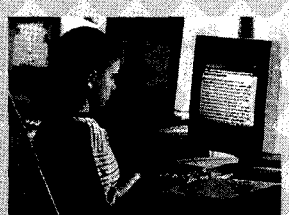

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pean left-wingers to salvage a sort of reformed democratic socialism from the wreckage of Communism. This failed in practice when their peoples, acting on Vaclav Klaus's insight that "The Third Way leads to the Third World," chose incorporation into Western capitalism.

What links these former road-maps to the Clinton–Blair–Giddens theory is that they all are attempts to discover a political economy that is logically distinct from, or a practical middle way between, laissez-faire capitalism and interventionist socialism. In either case the attempt must fail. In logic, there cannot be an alternative to a spectrum that covers all the possibilities from governments that do nothing to governments that do everything. And in practice the middle way between laissez-faire and socialism is liberal capitalism, since laissez-faire is a purely theoretical model which no government in history has embraced (no, not even Hong Kong).

Thus, Mr. Blair has to describe Thatcherism, under which the government spent 40 per cent of gross domestic product, as an unregulated market society in order to present his own Third Way approach as an alternative that is "neither laissez-faire nor . . . state interference." But when he lists the actual policies that constitute the Third Way—"to promote macro-economic stability; to develop tax and welfare policies that encourage independence, not dependence"—it might be Mrs. Thatcher speaking. In short, the Third Way is no new direction in political economy, just a rhetorical strategy to make one's opponents seem "extreme" and oneself "moderate."

The strategy adapts to its environment. In the U.S., the New Democrat is Old Republican writ small. He believes in welfare reform, a balanced budget, and very small tax cuts. Just as Eisenhower's "New Republicans" were attempting to blend into a mildly liberal political climate, so today's New Democrats are bent on appeasing the mildly conservative mood of post–Cold War America. In Britain, the Third Way means accepting Mrs. Thatcher's macro-economic and labor reforms while taxing, spending, and regulating a little more than she would have done—but not so much that the markets take fright.

And in Germany the Third Way is . . . anyone's guess. Before the election, the new chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, presented himself as the advocate of a vague "New Middle," and the German establishment was hoping that he would bring in much-needed Thatcherite reforms to revive the sluggish economy (on the "Nixon goes to China" model). But with a parliament dominated by Social Democrats, way-out Greens, and former Communists, and with "Red Oskar" Lafontaine in the Finance Ministry, Germany is likely to *increase* economic featherbedding. For a forecast of the results, examine the economic history of Britain following Harold Wilson's Labour victory in 1964.

If Mr. Schröder cannot pursue Third Way politics, that is because Helmut Kohl, unlike Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, did not carry out the market reforms that would now enable him to spend the proceeds and talk loudly of his own compassion. Considered from a distance, the new chancellor is not approaching the Third Way behind his American and British confrères; he is actually ahead of them—further along toward the place where intervention and spending have ceased to be pleasures and become burdens. And that is where Mr. Clinton, Mr. Blair, and their paradigm-infatuated allies will eventually arrive too.

November and After

THE November elections, as we noted last issue, will and should be a referendum on Bill Clinton. Republicans are likely to win it: Support for the President is passive, opposition active. No wonder Democrats are attacking Newt Gingrich, as they do whenever they are desperate. It never works. (Just ask all the special-election candidates who have tried it; you can reach them at home.) It certainly won't work now, when the attacks can barely be heard above the din. And as flawed as the "historic achievement" of the 1997 balanced-budget deal was, one thing it definitely accomplished was to make it impossible for Democrats to run against a "do-nothing Congress."

But it does not follow that Republicans should try to coast to victory on the strength of their fund-raising and Clinton's hell-raising. For one thing, an attractive agenda could make the difference between a good Republican year and a watershed. In addition, Republicans need to have some idea of what to do next year besides weighing President Clinton's fitness for office. Regardless of their verdict, they are likely to have more power than ever. Republican control of the House will be secure. Republicans will reach close to high tide in the Senate: in 2000 they will have a lot of vulnerable incumbents to defend; and as irritating as John Chafee (R.I.) and Jim Jeffords (Vt.) are, they will probably be the last Republicans to hold those seats for some time.

Republicans may, in short, have a few years to enact legislation as far-reaching as that passed by the Watergate Congress. Democrats at that time exploited Republican weakness to win ruinous changes in the budget process, draconian ethics laws, the War Powers Act, and more. But Republicans must start talking now about their plans for reform. That way they can start to create a consensus within the party, and lay the groundwork for the public. The alternatives are to spend the next Congress paralyzed or overreaching.

Above all, Republicans need to say something about the economy—if only to avoid the blame if, as seems likely, it slips into recession. The conventional political wisdom is that they can wait until the "real economy" stalls to address the issue. But this ignores the unprecedented number of middle-class investors and their anxieties about the stock market. Republicans need to explain why the Clinton–Rubin prescription of international welfare

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"Immigrants Want And Need To Learn English. Will Politicians Ever Get The Message?"

Mauro E. Mujica, Architect
Chairman/CEO, U.S.English
Immigrant

"Multi-lingual ballots. U.S. citizenship exams in foreign languages. Driver's license tests in dozens of different languages. Bilingual education programs that fail to teach children English language proficiency.

"Politicians and bureaucrats seem to have forgotten the idea of a common language for all Americans. Instead, our government is expanding multi-lingual services to accommodate more and more foreign languages. But as an immigrant whose native language is Spanish, I know that immigrants do not need multi-lingual government—they need help learning English.

"That's why I became Chairman of U.S.ENGLISH. With over 1.2 million members nationwide, we are the largest, non-partisan, non-profit organization committed to making sure government—at all levels—does not waste your tax dollars providing services in foreign languages when that money could be better spent simply teaching new immigrants English.

"Even though over 80% of Americans believe English should be the official language of the United States, the politicians are dragging their feet. They think it is not 'politically correct' because it might offend a small but vocal group of radicals who hate the traditional American ideal of the Melting Pot.

"What's really offensive is when politicians ignore the will of the people they are supposed to represent. They think the voters aren't really paying attention. That's why U.S.ENGLISH is publishing a Voter's Guide to let you know where your candidates stand on English as our official language. So that on Election Day you can send a message to the politicians in a language they can understand."

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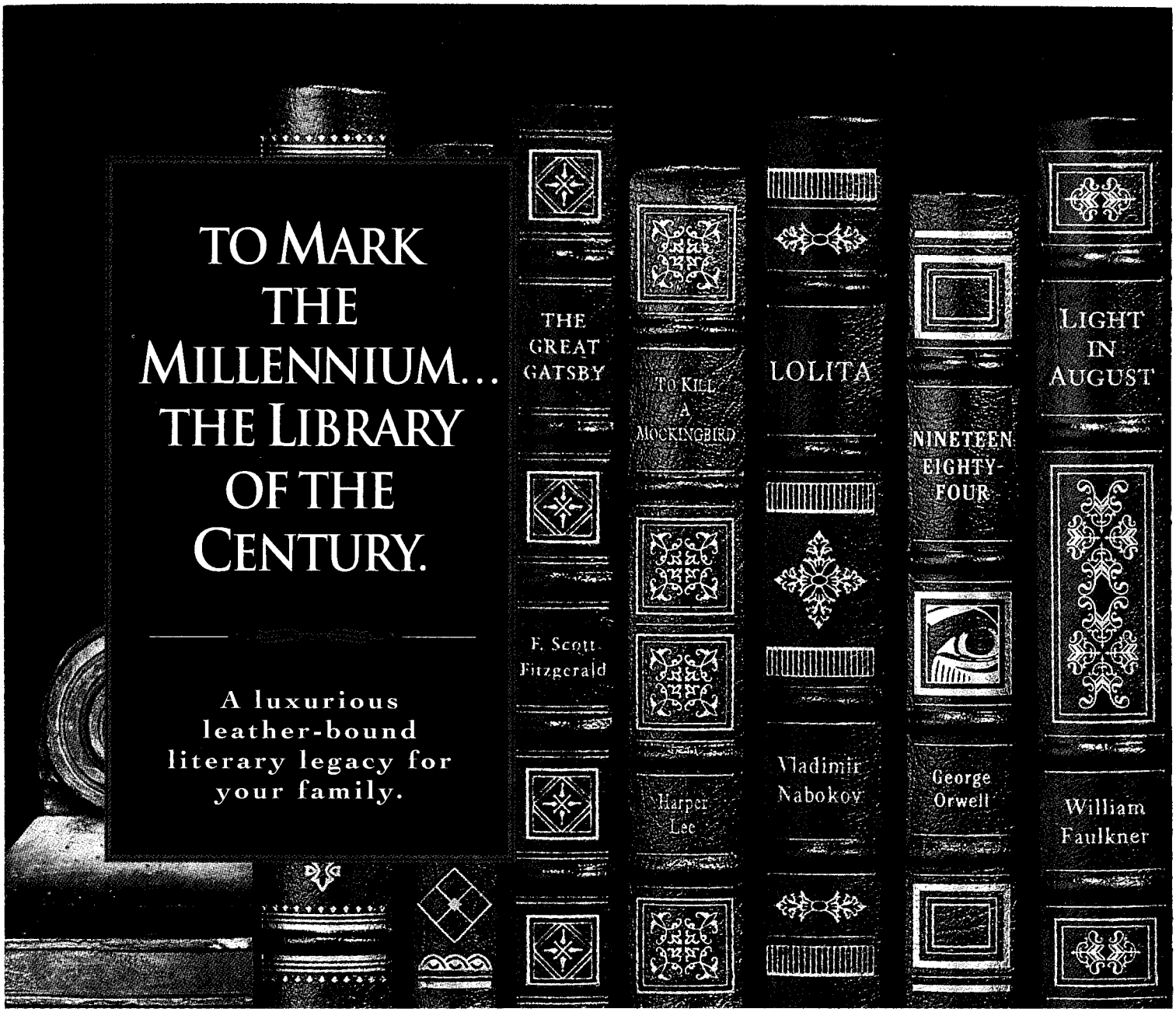

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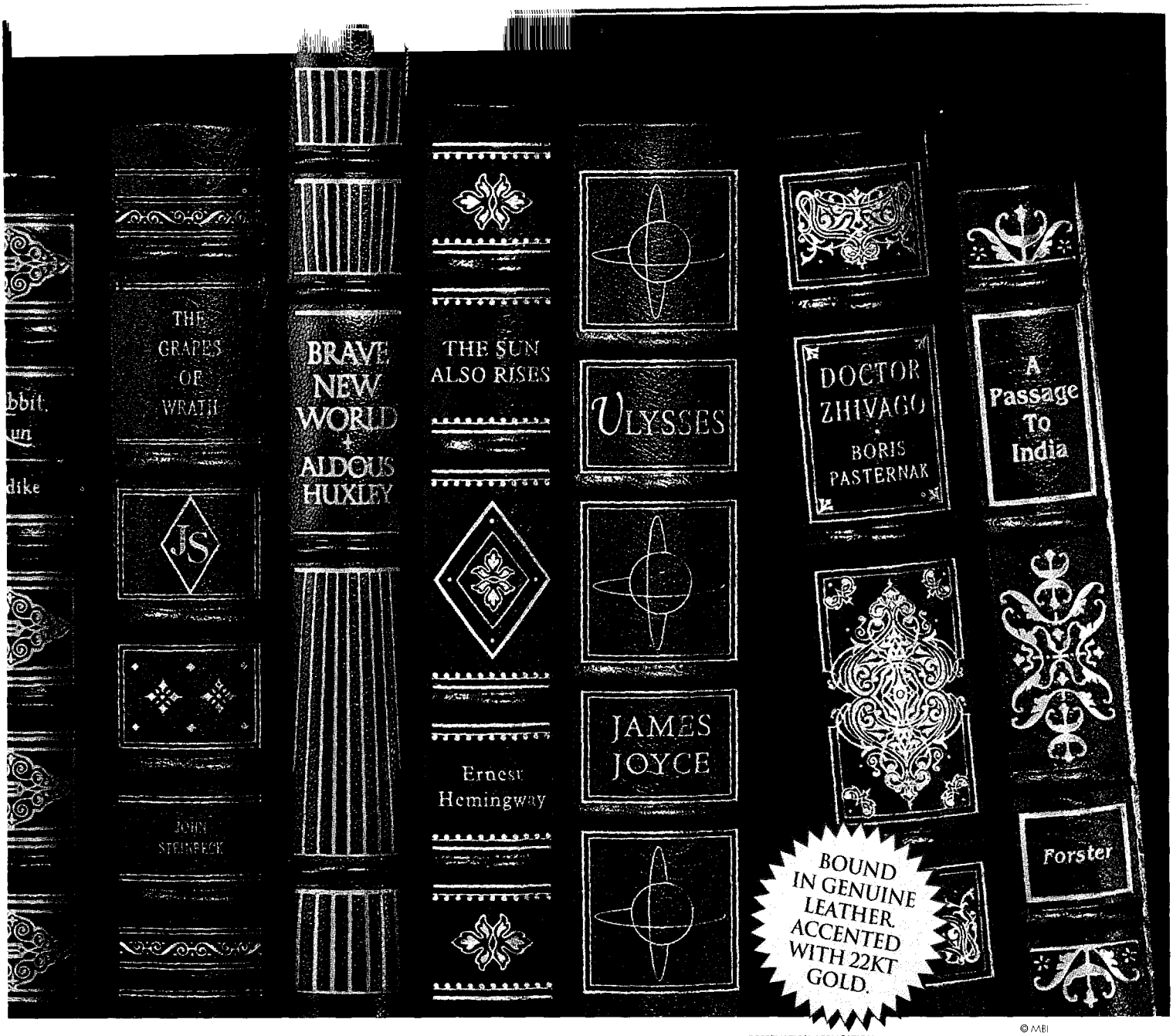

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The Clinton 200

Ken Starr had 11 reasons why President Clinton should go, the Judiciary Committee added another 4, and now—so as to hold up our end—we suggest another 185, for a clean 200 total.

"I don't recall" • Reappearing billing records • Federal toilet mandates • "Safe, legal, and rare" • Lip-biting • Joycelyn Elders • Jim Carville • "Mend it, don't end it" • Dishonest defiance of Supreme Court on preferences • HRC: "There is no such thing as other people's children" • Taking credit for repealing preferences • Paying nuclear blackmail to North Korea • HRC on health care and small business: "I can't save every undercapitalized business in America" • Siccing the FBI on Billy Dale • Siccing the IRS on conservatives • Defending partial-birth abortion • Keeping D.C. kids trapped in rotten schools • Suing California for repealing preferences • The DNA speech • Screwing around with the Census • Screwing around with the interns • More rather than less, sooner rather than later • The Fleetwood Mac revival • Filegate • Tax hikes • "It might surprise you to know that I think I raised them [taxes] too much too" • Jaw-jutting • Phony privilege claims • Underhanded privilege claims • Soldiers and Sailors Act • Making lying to one's diary safe, legal, and common • "The most ethical Administration in history" • Firing all the U.S. attorneys • Draft-dodging • Eliminating *Beck* enforcement upon taking office • ABM treaty • HRC's explanation of $100,000 profit from *Wall Street Journal* reading (would that she read the editorial page as closely) • Hoarding children's vaccines • Clinton's explanation for the Lincoln bedroom: "Both of us had lost a parent and we just hadn't kept in touch with people like we should have" • Making us long for Jimmy Carter • Making us long for George Bush • Making us long for Warren Harding • Scripting aides' reaction to his confession speech • Exploiting church burnings • Attacking conservatives for Oklahoma City • Sidney Blumenthal • Joe Conason (sorry, same thing) • Boxers or briefs • Apologizing to whole continents • The tobacco jihad • The tobacco abuse • Ira Magaziner • Peanut-free zones on airplanes • Trying to take over health care • Violence Against Women Act • "Unspeakably vulgar pleasure" he takes in the office (Mark Helprin) • A Cabinet that looks like America • A Cabinet that looks like the bar scene in *Star Wars* (Don Imus) • Letting China dictate his travel schedule • Letting China fund his campaign • The small-breast defense • Telling Monica his phones are tapped by foreign governments and then proceeding • Jogging shorts • Pasty white thighs in jogging shorts • Scorched-earth policy • Cheating at golf • Mediscare • Screwing up traffic every time he visits NYC • John Travolta as foreign-policy advisor • John Travolta as President • Trailer-park trash • Making state troopers pimps • Making Betty Currie a pimp • Half-hearted salutes • The *60 Minutes* interview • Kyoto treaty • Refusing to lift arms embargo on Bosnia • Sending troops instead • While receiving oral sex • Threatening Secret Service agents during Eleanor Mondale incident • Calling George Bush dishonest • The Hamptons • George Stephanopoulos • Haircut on the LAX runway • Renaissance Weekends • "For the children" • Hush money for Hubbell • Loathing the military • Giving Geraldo Rivera an exclusive interview in China • Using anti-mob laws against peaceful abortion protestors • "If everybody in the country had the character that my wife has, we'd be a better place to live" • Registering illegal immigrants as voters • Tax deductions for depreciated underwear • How they got depreciated • Sara Lister • Gutting the military • Timber "summits" • Strobe Talbott • Footnote 210 • Barbra Streisand • "Kiss it" • "Not appropriate" • "Misleading" • "It depends on how you define alone" • "That depends what the meaning of the word 'is' is" • Town meetings • Mike McCurry explaining Catholic theology to Cardinal O'Connor • McCurry • All-nighters • Toe-sucking advisors • Waco • Dancing on the beach with Hillary • Jane Doe #5 • Seances with Eleanor Roosevelt • *Wanting* to talk to Eleanor Roosevelt • Years of "I feel your pain" jokes • *It Takes a Village* • 24 hours a day of Greta Van Susteren • Walt Whitman revival • Suggesting a vote against David Dinkins would be racist • Coddling Saddam Hussein • Smearing Scott Ritter • Being a Rhodes scholar • The dress • "Legally accurate" • Smearing Paul McHale • Taking credit for balanced budget • Taking credit for economy • Wishing he had a challenge like WWII • Complaining about own leaks • Gore telling soldiers' families their sons died "in the service of the United Nations" • Making every other sentence a double entendre • Monica loves him • Did we mention Fleetwood Mac? • "I haven't been to a McDonald's since I've been President." • Al Gore • Susan Carpenter-McMillan • Friends of Bill • Paying people to volunteer • Multiple Ron Brown funerals • Easter Sunday 1996 • The politics of meaning • Astroturf • Telling MTV that this time he'd inhale • Having own VH1 special • Lani Guinier • Supposedly breaking the news to HRC re Monica: "You're not going to believe this but . . ." • "Every day can't be sunshine" • "Four years and $40 million" • Lanny Davis • Not drinking beer • Ostentatiously carrying Bible • Bringing Chelsea cross-country for photo ops • Asking Kathleen Willey to bring him chicken soup • Standing ovations at the UN • "Vast right-wing conspiracy" • Picking spiritual advisor with CNN contract • Mexican bailout • Government shutdowns • Banning ugly guns • Roger Clinton • Wanting to be President when he was 10 • "In the present tense, that is an accurate statement" • Naming dog "Buddy" • Claiming ignorance about Rwanda genocide • *Salon* • That picture of him shaking hands with JFK • Hugging everyone • Hillary • Having a First Cat • Psychobabble • Pizza delivery • The oh-so-morally-serious Paul Begala • He believes Anita Hill • He's even made ministering a double entendre • "Don't ask, don't tell" • Smoked pot, lied about it, and supports the drug laws • Making French intellectuals relevant • Permanent "interim appointments" • "I did not have sexual relations with *that* woman, Monica Lewinsky." • There are no tanks in Mogadishu • Getting back to the business of the people • He thinks he's black • "It's the right thing to do"

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will not solve the crisis abroad, and why tax rates need to be cut at home: not just because Americans are overtaxed, but because incentives to work, save, and invest are too meager.

It would be nice if Republicans tried to cut taxes now. But Senate Republicans won't do so in the limited time they have left this year. Many of them are frightened that Democrats might accuse them of financing their tax cut by dipping into the Social Security trust fund. The charge is bogus, both for technical reasons and because the trust fund itself is an accounting fiction. Besides, Democrats are demanding spending increases several times the magnitude of the tax cuts House Republicans have proposed—why aren't these "raiding the trust fund"? The point is that Democrats will claim that Republicans are endangering Social Security regardless of what they do.

Similarly, President Clinton will trigger a government shutdown if he thinks it serves his interests. Republicans should avoid giving him popular excuses to do so, but they should meanwhile prepare for it. They are better positioned to weather the storm than in 1995, when the public was less cynical about Clinton and they had spent months boasting that they would provoke a shutdown.

Next year Republicans can go on offense. The tax cuts they have proposed are a mish-mash designed to please various constituencies. That sort of politicking has its place, but it is no substitute for an appeal to the American public (or at least the middle class) as a whole based on across-the-board tax cuts. Republicans should be talking about that now—and about ending partial-birth abortion, building up our defenses, reining in the courts, expanding choices in health care, and, yes, slowly reforming Social Security. Republicans are showing gumption in challenging the Clinton Administration's corruption. Let them challenge its policies as well.

Capital Losses

IN early September Malaysia imposed sweeping capital controls to "insulate the economy from speculators and regain monetary independence." In a possible prelude to capital controls, the normally free-market Hong Kong is waging war against "speculators" by raising stock-market trading restrictions and making short-selling a criminal offense. The Hong Kong Monetary Authority has spent 13 per cent of its foreign-currency reserves to purchase 6 per cent of the Hong Kong stock market. Peking has ordered Chinese banks to stop trading hard currency in order to stop foreign reserves from flowing to offshore safe havens. The new Russian prime minister, Yevgeny Primakov, asserts that Moscow will take steps to curb the outflow of the U.S. currency.

Capital controls are a form of protectionism, and protectionist demands of all sorts are rising in response to the global economic crisis. The steel lobby in America is a case in point. And a spiral of competitive currency devaluations would amount to a monetary trade war. All this has a 1930s feel to it, and a 20 per cent U.S. stock-market correction has left the 120-million-strong U.S. investor class understandably anxious.

Capital controls are a cure that worsens the disease. Liberal academics who support them, like MIT's Paul Krugman, seem not to understand that foreign investors who cannot take their money out of a country will never bring it in. Indeed, the mere prospect of controls causes capital to flee. And since capital controls are typically a shield allowing governments to confiscate property, locals send their capital abroad or make plans to leave themselves. Financial controls (and trade restraints) are a tax on liquidity, lending, commerce, and wealth. Just look at India, where controls have kept the nation in a perpetual near-recession for decades.

Chile has taken a better path. To attract more investment from world financial markets, it has just eliminated nearly all capital controls by substantially reducing taxes and reserve requirements on foreign-owned deposits. With free markets, governments do not need to trap capital; for they have given it a reason to stay.

Kosovo Crossroads

BOB Dole has galvanized some Republicans by calling for military intervention to stop the Serb reign of terror in Kosovo. NATO ministers are poised to act. Thus, two key prerequisites for successful military action, congressional and Allied support, may be coming together. It behooves conservatives, nonetheless, to ask some further questions—especially about a military campaign that would be conducted by the same team that brought us the fiasco in Somalia and the increasingly precarious engagement in Bosnia.

The case for intervention in Kosovo can't be dismissed out of hand. While we have no direct interest there, the cohesion and credibility of NATO have been put at stake there as in Bosnia. By stepping up his repression, Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic is making it harder and harder for the West to resist intervention.

As things stand, we are likely to be dragged willy-nilly into yet another long-term commitment in the Balkans. Helping Kosovo's ethnically Albanian minority defend itself is not on the table: nobody wants to aid the Kosovo Liberation Army, whose methods have been brutal and whose demand for independence we do not wish to see fulfilled. In any case, Milosevic's ethnic cleansing along the Kosovo–Albania border makes this impractical. Instead, NATO appears likely to engage in "demonstrative" or incremental air strikes on tactical targets, just as it has fruitlessly done in Bosnia for years. This bluff might work—at this writing, Milosevic is pulling forces back—but if the bluff is called, the West will have to either retreat embarrassed or increase its commitments.

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The wiser course is to force an end to this now. At the very least we must stop appeasing Milosevic on the theory that we "need him" for the Dayton settlement. He is the problem, not the solution. Economic and diplomatic pressures should be brought to bear. And decisive attacks on strategic targets, including ones in Serbia proper, should be used to try to restore a balance of forces on the ground. The quicker we can extricate ourselves from this mess, the better.

NOTES & ASIDES

■ Dear Mr. Buckley:

I am writing again concerning the statement, "If A then B does not mean if not B then not A." In my earlier e-mail message I stated without elaboration that the following two statements are equivalent:

If A then B
If not-B then not-A.

In view of your reply to Mr. David S. Brown in the September 1 NATIONAL REVIEW, I obviously didn't convince you. This time I'll try harder.

The equivalence cited above is called the Rule of Transposition. Rather than provide a proof, which you can find in a text on logic, I'll demonstrate the transposition rule as it applies to one of the examples in your reply to Mr. Brown. Here is your sample conditional:

IF all Cypriots are liars AND
Nicodemus is a Cypriot
THEN Nicodemus is a liar.

The transposed conditional is

IF Nicodemus is not a liar
THEN Some Cypriots are not liars OR
Nicodemus is not a Cypriot.

It should be clear that the two conditionals have exactly the same logical content.

Sincerely,
Frank Markham Brown

■ Dear Mr. Buckley,

With reference to the September 1 "Notes & Asides," I feel a bit more exposition is needed.

The question is whether "If A then B" implies "If not-B then not-A." It does indeed (in mathematics this is known as the contrapositive), and this is very easy to prove. We know that A implies B, and we have that not-B is true. But then A cannot possibly be true, because if it were, B would have to be true, which it isn't. Therefore A is false, Q.E.D.

Students of mathematics are forever supposing that "If A then B" implies "If not-A then not-B," which is false; one must reverse the order. (David S. Brown unfortunately commits this error in his letter, certainly a mere typo.) You correctly assert that if all Cypriots are liars, and if Nicodemus is a Cypriot, then Nicodemus is a liar. But the contrapositive is that if Nicodemus is not a liar, then he is not a Cypriot. (Not-B implies not-A). Stating that "not all Cypriots are liars" means only that we do not have the "If A then B" in the first place, and so we can draw no conclusions at all.

Lastly, *Modern English* has it wrong. "If the water is cold, Phil won't swim; Phil will swim; therefore, the water is not cold," is not a "fallacy" at all. The water cannot be cold, for if it were, Phil would not swim, but we know Phil will swim. The only way out of this is to argue that Phil may not know for certain whether the water is cold or not (someone may have lied in order to sucker him into diving in), but then the first statement, "If the water is cold, Phil won't swim," is false, and the argument collapses.

Respectfully yours,
John D. Keisling, Ph.D.
Reston, Va.

Dear Dr. Keisling: You are very persuasive. However, it confuses, surely, to enter the problematic that Phil was deceived on the matter of water temperature. It seems to me that propositions of the logical sort assume corollary harmony, i.e., If Phil swam, the water was not cold. . . . Fun, this kind of thing, is it not? I hope others besides thee and me, and the persuasive Messrs. Brown, are amused. On the other hand, if they are not, then perhaps that is because they were told that the water was cold. Okay? Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Bill:

I don't share Rich [Lowry]'s high opinion of VMI's Josiah Bunting [Sept. 1]. Instead of giving in on the coed ruling he should have ordered the cadets to tear the place down, brick by brick, stone by stone, and sow every acre with salt; then he should have wrapped himself in the Confederate flag and put a bullet through his head. I love grand gestures.

Best,
Florence [King]

Dear Florence: Very nice. And what grand gesture might Bill Clinton make? Cordially, Bill.
—WFB

The Wolf Stirs

NATO kept huffing and puffing;
Serbia thought it was bluffing.
Kosovo, which
Started to twitch
While it was waiting, is stuffing.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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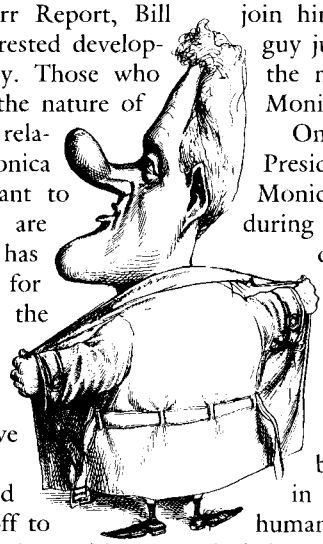
BREAD & CIRCUSES

Arrested Development

THE congressional inquiry to determine whether Bill Clinton committed impeachable acts could be neatly short-circuited by declaring Clinton's Presidency unconstitutional. The Starr Report provides convincing evidence, drawn from the President's reckless adolescent behavior, that he does not meet Article II's minimum age requirement. He certainly lacks the maturity, judgment, and self-control that the Founders hoped to ensure by mandating that the President be at least 35 years old.

Throughout the Starr Report, Bill Clinton's disturbing arrested development is on full display. Those who defensively insist that the nature of the President's sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky is not relevant to his ability to govern are wrong. The President has proved himself unfit for office not just with the felonies he committed to hide his squalid behavior but with the disordered, exploitative relationship itself.



The President lacked the discretion to slip off to a hotel for illicit assignations with a grown woman. Instead, he preyed upon a young employee, at his and her very public place of employment, with the door ajar, no less. Columnist Mona Charen recently noted the exhibitionist quality to the President's behavior and concluded, "The use of Monica Lewinsky as a sex toy during work hours—in the hallowed halls of the West Wing— reveals a man with no sense of the office."

In fact, the President behaved like a seventh-grader who is allowed to act as principal for a day and who giddily scribbles an obscenity on the school's official stationery. In order to engage in his degrading behavior with a young employee, the Leader of the Free World snuck around to avoid the watchful eye of the grownups in the White House—Ferris Bueller does the West Wing.

Following their first encounter, the President knew that Monica Lewinsky's pink intern pass posed a problem, because it limited her access to the West Wing. Once Monica became a permanent White House staffer, she could deliver folders and oral sex whenever the President called.

To avoid the suspicions of the adults (Monica's "meanies"), the President designed "accidental" meetings with her. Once he asked her to lurk in the hallway outside the White House theater so that he could spontaneously invite her to join him and his guests. The poor guy just wanted to take his girl to the movies, but a more cautious Monica declined.

On another occasion, the President enjoyed a guilty thrill as Monica performed a sex act on him during his phone conversation about deploying troops to Bosnia. U.S. Army Col. (ret.) James R. McDonough, who commanded those troops in 1995, gave the best analysis of this juvenile contempt for a President's gravest responsibility. As McDonough wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, "All human beings, if they are to remain in balance, must go through alternating cycles of work and relaxation. In this case, however, the act of casual sex at a moment of great importance smacks of callous indifference, sophomoric arrogance, and reckless disregard of the sanctity of U.S. soldiers' lives."

When the grownups became suspicious, Monica was banished to the Pentagon. During a visit on Easter Sunday, 1996, she told the President that she had been transferred. He responded with the helplessness of a grounded teenager: "Why do they have to take you away from me?"

Monica clearly sensed that she was involved with someone emotionally her own age. (Monica to Bill: "I love you, Butthead.") Over the course of their relationship, they talked on the phone approximately fifty times. On ten of those occasions they engaged in phone sex. During the other conversations, they talked about their childhoods, shared stories about work, told jokes, and argued like dating teenagers.

Monica: "And then he started yelling, and I yelled more, and he yelled more, and then he finally—"

Linda: "Did he ever say, 'Do you know who you're talking to?'"

Monica: "No."

That the President had enough in common with a vacuous twenty-something to converse in this vein for hours is as disturbing as their dirty talk.

After a sexual encounter in March 1997, the President told Monica he suspected that an unnamed foreign embassy was tapping his phones. The President proposed an astonishingly juvenile response. He advised her that if anyone asked about phone sex, she was to explain that they knew they were being monitored and so were pretending to be sexually intimate. Pretending! National security is threatened, and the President proposed a plan that wouldn't fool a nearsighted, hearing-impaired frat mother?

DID we already know this about the President? Although many voters may have concluded that Gov. Bill Clinton's consensual affair with Gennifer Flowers was not disqualifying, surely he would have been regarded as unfit for the Presidency if they had believed that he had grossly insulted Paula Jones as she alleged. It is now clear that he did.

Since Paula Jones's allegations became public in 1994, Bill Clinton's defenders have dismissed them as delusional, on the grounds that the charming governor would never have dropped his pants and requested oral sex within minutes of meeting a young woman. Well, Monica Lewinsky testified that President Bill Clinton did exactly that during their first encounter.

Trooper Danny Ferguson told the *Los Angeles Times* that Gov. Clinton thought Paula Jones had a "come hither" look when he spotted her in the lobby of the Excelsior Hotel.

Apparently, Clinton mistook Paula Jones's look, whereas he didn't mistake Monica Lewinsky's flashing of her thong underwear. But in both cases Clinton had exactly the same response. Talk about a "pattern of conduct." If he isn't impeached, he should at least be grounded. —KATE O'BEIRNE

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True Medal

Bob Kerrey is the antithesis of Bill Clinton. Can he be President?

ROBERT D. NOVAK

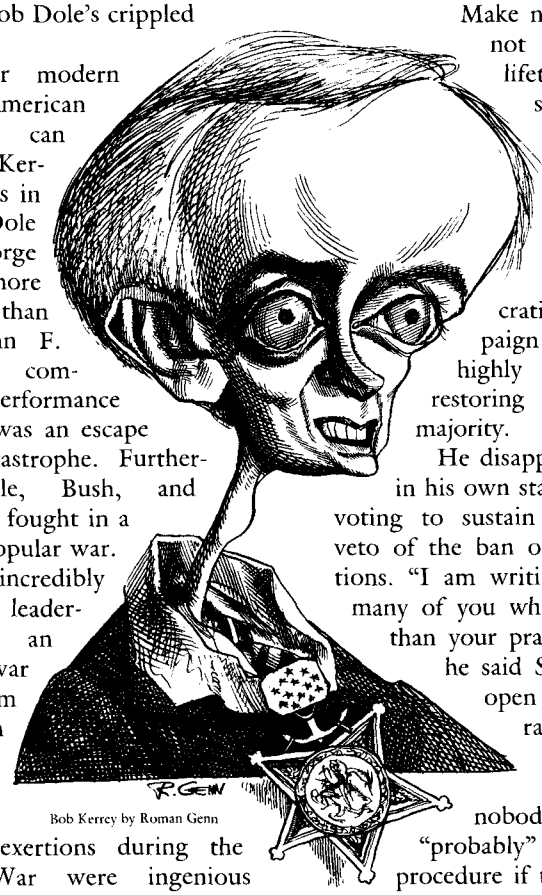
IN 1969, the last year of full-scale American combat in Vietnam, U.S. intelligence learned of Communist political cadres located on an island in Nah Trang Bay. A team of SEALs, the Navy's ferocious underwater commandos, was assigned to capture them. Leading the team was 25-year-old Lieutenant Junior Grade Joseph Robert Kerrey of Omaha, Nebraska.

In the dead of night on March 14, Kerrey's SEAL team sought the advantage of surprise by scaling a 350-foot sheer cliff so that the commandos could come in from above the Vietcong forces. Kerrey split his team into two elements and led them in a coordinated descent into the enemy camp. But there was no surprise. The VC ambushed the Americans. What happened next to the SEALs and their young leader is most graphically and eloquently described in a citation subsequently issued by the U.S. Navy:

> Just as they neared the end of their descent, intense enemy fire was directed at them, and Lt. (j.g.) Kerrey received massive injuries from a grenade which exploded at his feet and threw him backward onto the jagged rocks. Although bleeding profusely and suffering great pain, he displayed outstanding courage and presence of mind in immediately directing his element's fire into the heart of the enemy camp. Utilizing his radio man, Lt. (j.g.) Kerrey called in the second element's fire support which caught the confused Vietcong in a devastating crossfire. After successfully suppressing the enemy's fire, and although immobilized by his multiple wounds, he continued to maintain calm, superlative control as he ordered his team to secure and defend an extraction site. Lt. (j.g.) Kerrey resolutely directed his men, despite his near-unconscious state, until he was eventually evacuated by helicopter.

Kerrey was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the most exalted of American military decorations, for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty." The citation notes that the operation was a success, obtaining "critical intelligence" from the captured enemy cadres. The citation neglects to mention that Kerrey's valor cost him his right leg, amputated below the knee—a daily reminder of his near-death experience, much like Bob Dole's crippled arm.

No other modern high-level American politician can match Bob Kerrey's exploits in Vietnam. Dole and George Bush were more victims than heroes. John F. Kennedy's commendable performance in PT-109 was an escape from a catastrophe. Furthermore, Dole, Bush, and Kennedy all fought in a long-ago, popular war. Kerrey's incredibly courageous leadership in an unpopular war sets him apart from his rivals in both parties, most of whose exertions during the Vietnam War were ingenious efforts to avoid wearing the uniform.



Bob Kerrey by Roman Genn

That night in Nah Trang Bay was the defining moment of Bob Kerrey's life. What followed was long hospitalization, bitterness at the American leaders who had betrayed him and the American people who did not support him, success in building a restaurant chain from scratch and then a political career that made him governor of Nebraska, a U.S. senator, a spectacularly unsuccessful presidential candidate in 1992, and, now, a prospect to try again in 2000. Sen. Kerrey wonders whether he has a chance, for truly he bears no resemblance to the man whom the Democrats preferred to him in 1992 and who was then twice elected President of the United States.

Bob Kerrey is the obverse of Bill Clinton. While Kerrey was leading SEALs into bloody combat, Clinton was dodging the draft. While Clinton is admired among political professionals for his disciplined presentation of a campaign's theme, Kerrey dismays his managers by his inability to deliver a consistent message, a failing that derives in part from his notorious candor (he once called Clinton "an unusually good liar"). Clinton is the inveterate poll-watcher who seeks to match public opinion, while Kerrey often swims upstream against the consensus.

Make no mistake, Kerrey is not a conservative. His lifetime American Conservative Union rating is only 5 per cent. He fought the Freedom to Farm bill cutting back farm subsidies. He chairs the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, with the highly partisan mission of restoring his party's Senate majority.

He disappointed many friends in his own state this year by again voting to sustain President Clinton's veto of the ban on partial-birth abortions. "I am writing this letter to tell many of you why I voted differently than your prayers wanted me to," he said September 18 in "an open letter to Nebraskans" whose meandering prose is pure Kerrey and satisfies nobody. He said he would "probably" vote to outlaw the procedure if the ban were limited to post-viable fetuses and with an

Mr. Novak is a syndicated columnist for the Chicago Sun-Times *and a* CNN *commentator.*

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exception for the "health" of the mother, but wanted "to narrow a definition of 'health' exceptions that is too broad." On abortion, Kerrey sounds like a man arguing with himself.

It is not the quantity of Kerrey's defections from the liberal line that is important, it is their quality. Genuinely the "New Democrat" that Clinton has professed to be, he is an outspoken advocate of "entrepreneurial capitalism" and in that role has broken party ranks to propose taking the first steps toward privatizing Social Security. That fits his insistence, ignored by the White House, that something must be done about runaway entitlements.

His was one of the arrows shot through the heart of the Bill and Hillary Clinton health care plan. On August 5, 1994, Kerrey took the Senate floor to declare his opposition and say: "I do not want America to go down the road the President is asking us to travel." He issued a press release asserting that Clinton care would "centralize health care decision-making in Washington and lead to skyrocketing entitlement spending by the federal government."

What really sets Kerrey apart from his Democratic colleagues (and, indeed, from most Republicans) is how unashamedly he preaches love of and service to country. How much did his experience in Vietnam affect him? "A lot," he told me. "I am using it. I am trying to talk about patriotism—using my story a little bit to talk about me and patriotism." That represents a major change for Kerrey, who for much of his political career had not dwelt on the stirring exploits of his youth. I suspected something was happening on January 20 of last year when the senator showed up at my apartment for an inauguration party wearing his Congressional Medal of Honor.

I had never before seen a civilian with that august decoration around his neck, and Kerrey had hardly ever worn it since he received it from President Richard M. Nixon nearly three decades earlier, in May of 1970. But on July 19, 1997, he attended the quadrennial gathering of Medal winners held before every presidential inauguration, and decided that he would wear it the next day—and at every subsequent presidential inauguration—in memory of the heroes who had won the award posthumously.

Later in 1997, Kerrey started working his war experience into his set political speech, and he is still doing it. He

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"A brilliant mix of theory and practice, this is a book you will share with your friends."
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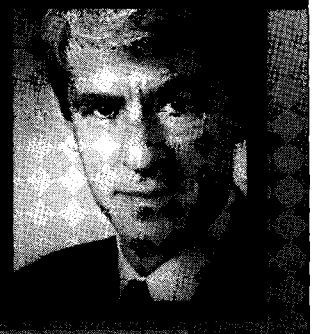
The welfare state rests on the assumption that people have the right to food, shelter, health care, retirement income, and other goods provided by the government. David Kelley examines the historical origins of that assumption, which, he shows, is deeply flawed. Welfare "rights," he argues, are incompatible with freedom, justice, and true benevolence, and they have damaged the genuine welfare of those who can least afford to become dependent on the government.



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tells how he went "to the mailbox with a certain amount of dread" in December of 1965, as a 22-year-old graduate (in pharmacy) from the University of Nebraska. The letter offered him "a chance to take a free physical examination. It was my first experience with national health care." He tells of enlisting in the Navy, then taking underwater and airborne training to become a SEAL.

He brushes over the details of his combat and the amputation of his leg in a naval hospital in Philadelphia and then says something that most of his listeners have never heard from a politician, let alone a presidential candidate: "For most of my life, I learned from my father to be patriotic, to love my country, to believe that my leaders would never deceive me, never lie to me, never mislead me. Well, I came home in 1970 and I discovered that my leaders had lied to me, that they had deceived me, that my country didn't want me to do what I did . . . All my life was gone. I didn't love my country any more, and felt bad as a consequence.

'I don't think the problem in America is the rich. I don't like soak-the-rich rhetoric.'

"Then, over time, it began to dawn on me that that hospital in Philadelphia—those nurses, those doctors, those physical therapists that were there in that hospital—were not there as a consequence of Sears & Roebuck. As big a fan as I am of the marketplace, the market did not build that hospital. A law was passed in the United States Congress, and some President signed that law, authorizing that hospital to be built, authorizing people to be hired, authorizing me to be delivered there, and authorizing those people to do what they could to save my life and give me a fighting chance to put my life together. This is a great nation to do that, it occurred to me."

That is a remarkable combination of old-fashioned patriotism with conventional Democratic dogma elevating the role of government. But it is something more. When I heard Kerrey deliver his set speech to an audience of party regulars in Hampton, N.H., a week after President Clinton had admitted lying to his countrymen for the past seven months, a few commented to me that a contrast was being intentionally drawn.

If Clinton felt he had beat the system in avoiding the jungles of Southeast Asia, Kerrey returned from there with a deeply ingrained bitterness. "I knew that there were protests against the war," he explained to me, "but I didn't know how little support there was for what I was doing until I got home. I felt like I needed to take my uniform off, hide it away, not tell anybody I was in the service. I wasn't patriotic any more."

Support from family and friends mitigated his despair, but he did not fully come to terms with his experience until he visited Communist Vietnam in 1991. "The [Vietnamese] people I talked to said: 'We like you Americans, and it's not your money. You came over here and fought for us. You were fighting for our freedom. You are not like the French, you're not like the Russians, you're not like anybody else we know. You came thousands of miles across an ocean, put yourselves on the line for us. This is a great country.'"

For thirty years, Bob Kerrey has pondered what he did that night on the Vietnamese coast overlooking the South China Sea. To get a Congressional Medal of Honor, he explains, "you have to have an action that is witnessed by somebody who can write and likes you and knows how to work the thing through the system." Kerrey was at first recommended for the Navy Cross. But CINCPAC (Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet)—the late Adm. John P. McCain, father of the U.S. senator and a man Kerrey never met—was so impressed by the young SEAL's action that he upgraded the award to the Medal of Honor.

Kerry has slowly become comfortable being introduced to political gatherings as a hero. "It impresses people, and that's good," he told me. "But I want them to remember that it was an act of a very young man in a combat situation. I don't know if I would have done it in daytime and I had seen the extent of my injuries." Nevertheless, he believes his story sends the right message, as does the motion picture *Saving Private Ryan*. "I loved it," he said, "because on the way out I heard two young people my children's age [in their early twenties] who said, 'I'll never go to a Memorial Day celebration and not feel different, and I know something now: these guys paid a hell of a price for us.' That's a good thing to know and a good thing to remember." Kerrey worries that in the era of the all-volunteer armed forces, a whole generation of well-educated Americans will grow up never having served their country.

"I think they are missing something," says Kerrey. This comes from a once-disillusioned veteran who said that, knowing what he then knew, he would go to prison rather than be drafted. As recently as 1988, he ambushed a Democratic Leadership Conference intended to pump up support for universal national service by describing the plan as "lousy." But Kerrey's willingness to change his mind, which makes campaign consultants berate him for lack of focus, leads him to say now that he would support it "if I had a way to pay for it." He would like to require a year's service "for every high-school kid when you graduate. You do a year, so that when you are done, you say, 'I am an American, I served.'"

Kerrey argues that they "can teach you character" in the military. "Conservatives need to think about that," he added. "Don't presume the government can't teach character." As for men and women training together, Kerrey rejects the politically correct view: "I am confused about that one. But I'm not confused about combat. Women wanting to be in combat? Why would anyone want to be in combat?" Such comments underline the fact that although Kerrey usually votes like a regular Democrat, he often does not sound like one.

PRESIDENT Clinton had to twist Kerrey's arm half off to get him to supply the necessary final vote for the 1993 tax increase concentrated on upper-bracket wage-earners, and five years later Kerrey still has his doubts. "I think it could have been a lot better," he says. "I don't think the problem in America is the rich. I don't like soak-the-rich rhetoric." He publicly assailed the President for opposing budget-cutting proposals early in his Administration and for going too slow on Internal Revenue Service reform this year. Where Kerrey sounds most different from the Clinton Administration is on Social Security: "All we've done is lifted people's income by transferring income to them, not by making them wealthy," he told me. Opposed so far by the Administration, he wants people to be allowed to set aside in retirement accounts part of what they now pay in payroll taxes: "I want Americans to have the chance to acquire wealth, the inde-

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pendence that comes from wealth and the inspiration to be generous."

Kerrey still thinks Clinton is an "unusually good liar," and he believes the President faces a serious difficulty in rebuilding trust in the wake of the Monica Lewinsky confession. "Bill Clinton does have good virtues," Kerrey told me a few days after the President's grand-jury testimony, "but there is a weakness here, a problem that needs to be dealt with." He was quick to second Sen. Joseph Lieberman's rebuke of Clinton's behavior two weeks later, and he then defended Lieberman against criticism from colleagues in a closed-door meeting of the Democratic leadership. After Kenneth Starr's impeachment report was issued, Mark Shields and I interviewed Kerrey for CNN. At the end of the broadcast, when I asked him if the President's behavior had angered him, he displayed the candor that has been the bane of his advisors' existence: "Yes. . . . There was a betrayal here. I mean, it's behavior. If half of it's true, if just what the President has stipulated is true—I mean he's Commander-in-Chief, for God's sake."

He sounded angry; this was not the smooth presentation of a buttoned-down politician of the 1990s. But then Bob Kerrey is not a buttoned-down politician of the 1990s. After a long afternoon and evening in New Hampshire concluded by the obligatory 11 P.M. interview on WMUR-TV, he agreed to my suggestion for a nightcap. A politician and a reporter having a late-evening beer was commonplace twenty or thirty years ago but seldom happens today. As Kerrey and I drank our beer at the Holiday Inn in downtown Manchester, we started watching the late television news report of Mark McGwire's exploits that night. So, much to the dismay of his aides, who wanted to get him to bed, the senator ordered refills of our beers.

He talked about something most politicians wouldn't: how the seeds for trouble in the Middle East were sown in the Versailles Treaty. The next week, during the August congressional recess, Kerrey-supporters from all over the country gathered on Nantucket to discuss his prospects for 2000. "I don't want to support some losing candidate, especially if it's me," he says. It's hard to imagine the Democratic Party nominating him, but he would pose an interesting choice for independent voters—and for a good many Republicans. □

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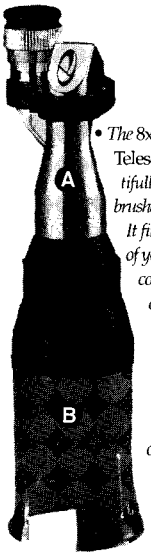

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Hits Happen

As Al D'Amato and Chuck Schumer square off, New York prepares for the mess.

RICHARD BROOKHISER

As soon as nine-term congressman Charles Schumer won the New York Democratic senatorial primary, Republican incumbent Alfonse D'Amato opened a blitz of television ads branding him a "Brooklyn liberal" who thinks the wild west starts at the Hudson. Schumer's opening ads, meanwhile, declared that D'Amato had been responsible for "too many lies." D'Amato accused Schumer of "character assassination," and Schumer said it was no surprise that D'Amato was behaving like a "bully." Since each man has a war-chest that could pay the budget of a small Caribbean nation, New Yorkers can look forward to many more such exchanges before November.

The demeanor of the candidates matches their rhetoric. Vulgarity and bathos chase each other across Sen. D'Amato's face like autumn clouds. After shaking hands with him, you want to wash—once you've made sure he has not pocketed your wedding band. Rep. Schumer is an officious homunculus whose quick, jerky movements and clattering voice call to mind a wind-up pecking chicken. But make no mistake: both men are tough and nimble politicians.

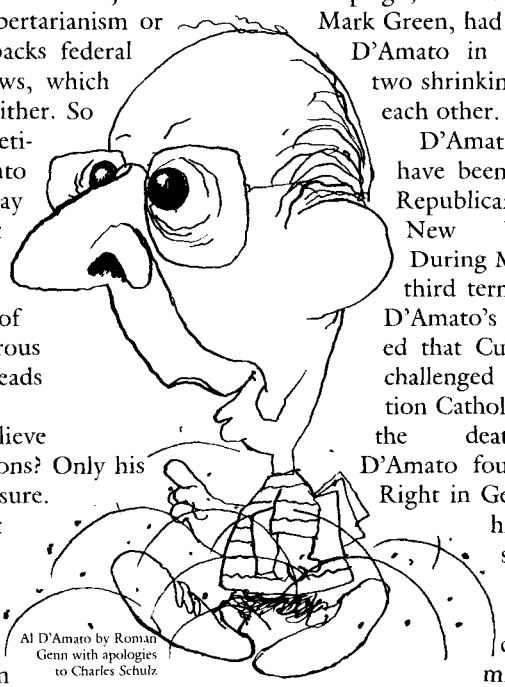
Sen. D'Amato's career has been a history of hair's-breadth escapes and unlikely victories. In only one of his three Senate races (1986) did he win more than 50 per cent of the vote. In the other two (1980 and 1992), he edged the Democrat by a single percentage point, or less. He stays afloat by a combination of constituent services, the blunders of his enemies, and high-profile positions on well-chosen issues. His cherished nickname, "Senator Pothole," identifies him as the can-do yin to Daniel Patrick Moynihan's brainy yang. In the 1992 race his Democratic opponent, Robert Abrams, called him a "fascist," which D'Amato assailed as not only a gross smear, but an anti-Italian affront. His issue advocacy can be ferocious—Bob Dole once remarked that he "does not take 'yes' for an answer"—and it is often exercised on conservative issues. (D'Amato has always run with the Conservative Party's endorsement.) He defended the Baltic nations in the days of Gorbachev, gave early warnings about Saddam Hussein, and demanded federal follow-up on New York City's lackadaisical response to the Crown Heights pogrom.

But he also carefully blurs his image with issues that are non-partisan, or liberal. In this cycle, his big three have been the hounding of Swiss banks for the stolen funds of Jewish depositors; federal laws against "drive-through" mastectomies (D'Amato never appears in public without a pink breast-cancer ribbon over his own breast); and gay rights. D'Amato not only supports gays in the military, which could be justified on the grounds of libertarianism or efficiency, but also backs federal anti-discrimination laws, which can be justified on neither. So intense is the competition between D'Amato and Schumer for gay support that a recent issue of *New York* magazine ran a montage of a pair of buffed homo-amorous bods with their heads pasted on.

Does D'Amato believe in any of these positions? Only his pollster knows for sure. Certainly he is not ashamed of his practicality. Defending a mid-Eighties vote when he broke Senate GOP ranks on Social Security reform, he gave the head-counter's credo: "You don't give blood when the patient's gonna die."

Charles Schumer, 47 years old to D'Amato's 61, went straight from Harvard Law School to the New York State Assembly, and straight from there to Congress, representing a district that winds through Brooklyn and Queens, stitching together clumps of Jews and other white ethnics. He began his tenure on the Hill with local issues such as protecting federal grants to cities with rent control, but he quickly branched out. He backed a federal law restricting demonstrations in front of abortion clinics, and he has been tireless in support of gun control, enshrining the spurious category of "assault weapons" in the Brady Bill and blasting congressional hearings into the Waco raid as National Rifle Association propaganda. (His support for the death penalty, his one right feint, and the fact that police groups back gun control, allow him to campaign as tough on crime.) Schumer publicizes his views, at least in the little world of New York City, through tireless self-promotion. A few years back, after he was quoted in four separate stories in a single issue of the *New York Times*, a memo came down urging reporters to be more choosy in their trips to the quote outlet.

Schumer considered running for governor this year, but settled on D'Amato as an easier target. Woman of last year Geraldine Ferraro blew a huge lead in the Democratic primary with a brainless campaign; the third candidate, Mark Green, had already lost to D'Amato in 1986. So the two shrinking violets go at each other.



Al D'Amato by Roman Genn with apologies to Charles Schulz

D'Amato claims to have been good for the Republican Party in New York State. During Mario Cuomo's third term as governor, D'Amato's polling showed that Cuomo could be challenged by a pro-abortion Catholic who was for the death penalty. D'Amato found Mr. Half-Right in George Pataki, a hitherto obscure state senator from Peekskill, who indeed beat the mighty Mario in 1994. Have the D'Amato years been good for conservatism? Herb London, the Conservative Party's candidate for governor in 1990, says no. "A libertarian would be for gays in the military. But would a libertarian believe credit-card rates are too high [another D'Amato hot-button]? He's a phony." D'Amato's control of state patronage,

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London believes, spreads phoniness around him. "It would be healthy for the GOP if he lost." Such considerations, and the sting of the Pataki endorsement, stimulated a primary challenge to D'Amato in the Right to Life Party—a tiny organization whose vote has nevertheless supplied D'Amato's margin of victory.

George Marlin, Conservative candidate for mayor of New York in 1993, vigorously disagrees. "a) This is New York. b) I don't claim to agree with every candidate I support on everything. c) What are the alternatives? We elect him to go to the U.S. Senate," where the pro-life side is "three votes short on overriding the veto on partial-birth abortion. Show me a bad vote [on abortion] that D'Amato has cast. When you look at key issues, it is essential to keep him in there." D'Amato beat his Right to Life challenger by almost 2 to 1; he had no opposition in the Conservative Party or the GOP.

D'Amato's makeover of state politics may serve him well this year.

D'Amato's makeover of state politics may serve him well this year. Schumer, unlike Abrams, is a shrewd and aggressive campaigner who will make no mistakes. But 1998 is not 1992. Then D'Amato was struggling against a Republican ticket that was headed by a feeble George Bush, whom Bill Clinton buried in New York. Now the GOP line will be headed by Gov. Pataki. Although his off-budget spending has hurt the state's credit rating, this has not yet shown up in the voters' taxes, and Pataki is hugely popular. If D'Amato can hold Schumer to 70 per cent in New York City, he should be able to eke out another victory on Long Island, in the City's northern suburbs, and upstate.

As the home-run race ended and the Senate race heated up, the two candidates hit their rhythm, raiding each other's base. Schumer trekked to the frontier to say how close he felt to Utica, New York (his father once lived there). D'Amato went to a synagogue in south Brooklyn between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, wearing a yarmulke labeled Alfonse. □

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Brussels Sprouts

As the EU grows, so do challenges to American leadership.

JEFFREY GEDMIN

A FEW years ago, David Brooks, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, lamented the latest advance in human evolution: Multilateral Man. He emerges from his limousine, wrote Brooks, and heads instinctively for long negotiating tables, "his hormones aroused by the presence of evenly spaced bottles of mineral water." He competes with colleagues to "see who can cram the most calls for international cooperation into a single speech." The essence of Multilateral Man is that he wants to be in government "but without the bother of having a country attached."

In Europe, he may soon get his wish. "When a new head of government takes over," one European Union official boasted to the German newspaper *Die Welt* this summer, "he does not immediately see what is in store for him." Consider Tony Blair. During a Stateside visit, the prime minister expressed Britain's sympathy with Washington's momentary hard line toward Iraq. Unfortunately, the EU, whose rotating presidency was in British hands at the time, was peddling a soft line on Saddam. And poor, parochial Mr. Blair forgot whose interests he was supposed to be representing. Members of the European Parliament blasted his "unilateral action."

There will be fewer surprises for Germany's new Social Democratic chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, who wants more power for the European Parliament and who has been sending his aides to Brussels this summer for tutorials. Schröder wants to "harmonize" Europe's fiscal and financial policies and insists that the EU "fight unemployment in a united way." Will Schröder outEurope the four-term incumbent he unseated, Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl? It's part of the Zeitgeist, with a special German dimension. What was once an effective method of taming Hitler's children—tie them up with multilateralism abroad; tie them down with "consensus über alles" at home—has become a politically correct obsession that infects the Continent and poses serious challenges for American foreign-policy thinking.

America's most important allies remain the Western European democracies; together we and they have made up the Atlantic Alliance of the last half-century. We conduct $250 billion worth of trade with them a year. When we need help on terrorism, proliferation, the Middle East, or Russia, it is in Europe where most of our dickering takes place, because the stakes are high and cooperation is often essential. But with Germany in the lead, Europe has been remaking itself—with minimal American participation. A new generation is taking over, one that would rather visit Brussels than Washington. When Washington finally opens its eyes we may find that a new European Union has emerged, a European Union that has snapped the transatlantic link and is operating in opposition to American interests.

Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, and Gerhard Schröder by Roman Genn

To a large extent, we have ourselves to blame. Americans have supported European integration for nearly half a century. And the "ever closer union" that Helmut Kohl helped push is ostensibly part of a project Americans wholeheartedly support: to rid the continent of malign nationalism and the seeds of future conflict. To this end, in January, 11 of the EU's 15 members will surrender their national currencies and adopt the Euro; some call it the greatest voluntary transfer of sovereignty in history. Mr. Brooks might call it Multilateral Man's finest moment. But don't assume it will secure peace in Europe.

For one thing, the single-currency experiment is exclusively a Western European project. The Euro will not address the stiff challenges to peace and stability from Kaliningrad to Kosovo. U.S. envoy to Macedonia Chris Hill recently criticized the Western Europeans for "toasting themselves and claiming that they have achieved a united Europe" while the Balkans go up in flames. The point should have been made long ago.

Also overdue is a hard look at the conventional wisdom about the EU which Mr. Schröder appears to endorse uncritically and which the Greens, who are likely to help form the new government, wildly applaud. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott is a reliable source of the conventional wisdom. He argues that a "politically united Europe [will] be a stronger partner to advance our common goals, both within the transatlantic community and around the world." But which Europe is Talbott talking about, and what *are* its goals? Get past the throat clearing about common commitment to global economic prosperity, security, and human rights, and the picture clouds quickly.

Start with the Euro. EU officials cite the single currency as essential to their countries' competitiveness. It's now the consensus that Europe needs fundamental reform if its economies are to keep pace. But it is hard to fathom how a single currency will compel unwilling political classes to face up to tough choices they have heretofore dodged.

Mr. Gedmin is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and executive director of the New Atlantic Initiative.

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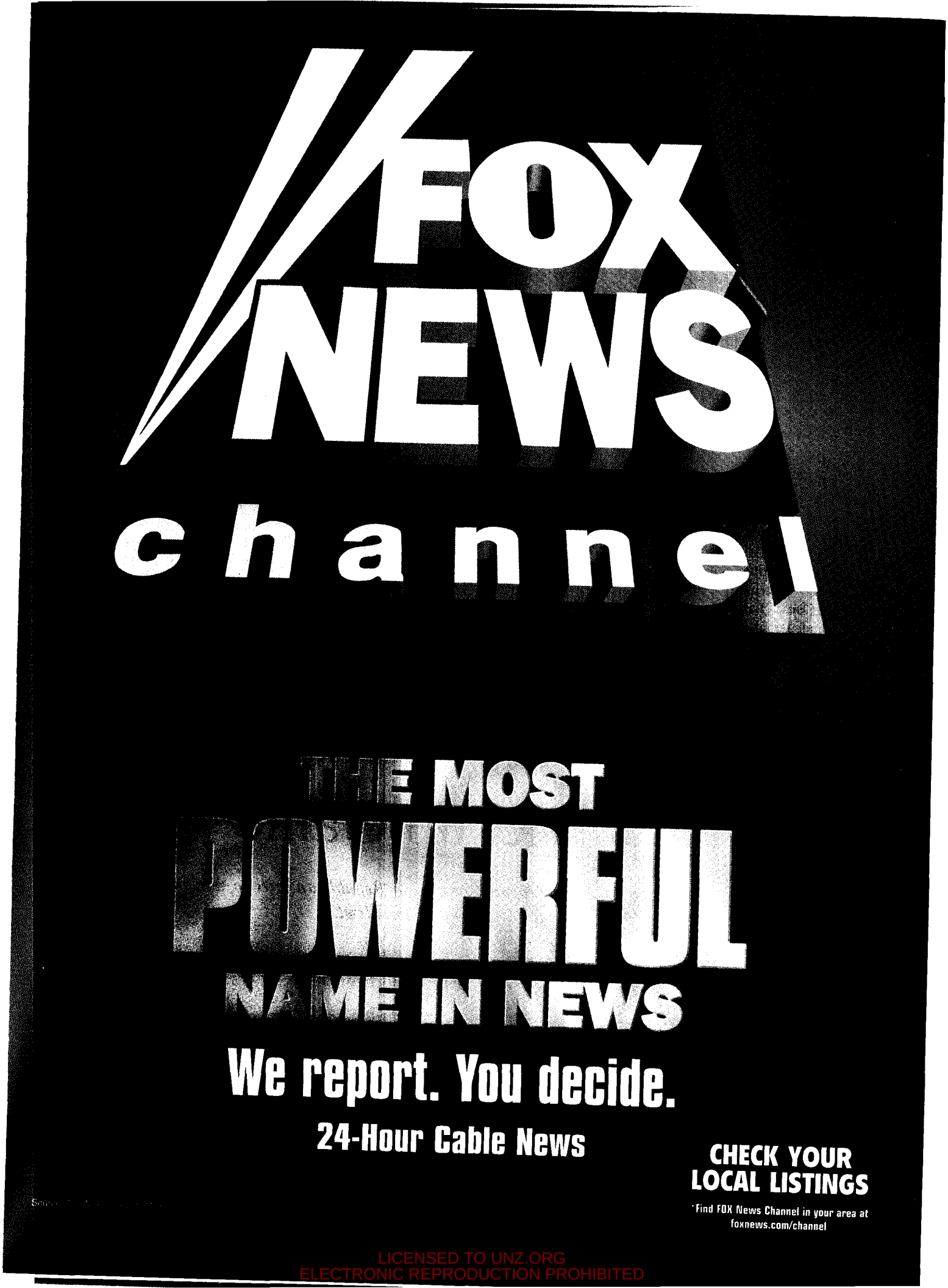

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Otmar Issing, an outgoing Bundesbank director who is becoming senior economist at the new European Central Bank, has repeatedly warned that "monetary union is not a panacea." But there's little evidence that the message has sunk in.

Will Schröder lead on tax, welfare, and labor-market reforms? His record as governor in Lower Saxony is not encouraging. Nor were his campaign attacks on the "brutal" policies of the Free Democrats, the country's only pro-market party. If Schröder did seek reform, he would face fierce opposition not only from the Greens, but also from the power machine of his own party: leftist Oskar Lafontaine controls the SPD and has already laid claim to the finance ministry. He would also face the powerful labor unions and a risk-averse, entitlement-crazed public. EU protectionism may ultimately prove the weapon of choice to shield Western Europeans who resist painful reforms from feeling the full consequences of their dereliction.

That America and Europe will diverge more in the future is, in part, a natural result of the end of the Cold War.

The economics of the Euro are just the beginning, though. EU leaders themselves freely say that monetary union is first and foremost a political project—and it is one quite at odds with Talbott's vision. French officials cite the Euro as a means by which to develop a global political counterweight to the world's only superpower. Former German chancellor Helmut Schmidt says "the arrival of the Euro will . . . change the whole world situation so that the United States can no longer call all the shots." A headline in the German weekly *Der Spiegel* referred thus to Americans and the Euro: "At first they mocked, now they fear it." Is it possible that the malign nationalism that EU leaders insist they are burying will be replaced with a malign supranationalism?

It's not just Americans who can feel the heavy breathing. Miguel Moratinos, EU envoy to the Middle East, recently accused the Israelis of having an attitude problem. "How long can you go on ignoring us?" he asked. "Europe will have a single currency next year and what will you say then? How will you be able to ignore such power?"

The EU has already become a prickly partner. The policy of dual containment of Iran and Iraq has failed, in large part because the Clinton Administration was never able to get the EU on board. The last time Washington threatened force against Iraq, France's interior minister said he would lead demonstrations though the streets of Paris the moment the first bomb fell. A bilateral agreement between Italy and Libya has just given Qaddafi's pariah state a foot in the EU's door. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright says that if Libya fails to cough up the suspects in the Pan Am 103 bombing case, the U.S. will call for increased international sanctions. The option may be gone before we get there. And if the U.S. decides that Milosevic's latest atrocities in Kosovo must be stopped? Look for a Red-Green coalition in Bonn to lead the EU in agonizing about the multilateral credential of any intervention.

America has always been different, in terms of history, culture, and temperament, from our European friends. That we and they will diverge more in the future is, in part, a natural result of the end of the Cold War. Europeans no longer feel dependent on the U.S. and understandably wish to move from adolescence to adulthood as modern geopolitical players.

However, if Western Europe continues down the road to political union, expect more lowest-common-denominator politics, multilateral opposition to U.S. policies, and, in crises, demands for "leadership by consensus," an oxymoron if there ever was one. Furthermore, what happens if the EU implements a Common Foreign and Security Policy? Under one scenario—where majority voting prevails—an EU member state could be restrained from acting in concert with the United States. In 1986, when the Reagan Administration decided to bomb Libya, President Mitterrand refused to permit U.S. planes to fly over France en route to Northern Africa, but Mrs. Thatcher was able and willing to cooperate with us.

Of course, Europeans are free to make their own choices. However, we do not have to stand on the sidelines passively and uncritically—let alone lead the cheering. It's time to tell our European allies of our doubts and concerns. If Europeans are sincere in wanting to maintain the transatlantic link, it's high time to explore a Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement and the development of Atlantic political institutions that will complement NATO and will bind America to the whole of Europe for the next generation. Strong and consistent U.S. leadership would help, of course. But what happens if, when America leads, the allies no longer follow? □

Pickup Game

In Reagan Country, a Republican tries to win one for the Gipper–and for Newt.

JOHN J. MILLER

STERLING, ILL.

DRIVING east on I-80, Mark Baker looks out the passenger window of his minivan and reads the brown highway sign off to the right: "To Birthplace of President Ronald Reagan Exit 41." Baker spins around in his seat. "You know what appalls me the most about Lane Evans?" he asks. "It's that he represents the congressional district where Ronald Reagan was born and grew up."

He may not represent it for much longer. An unreconstructed liberal in the heartland of America, Rep. Lane Evans is the kind of Democrat Republicans must knock off in November if they hope to increase their House majority by more than a handful of seats. Despite President Clinton's moral

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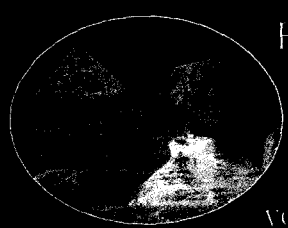
E T E R N A L



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meltdown, this year won't be a repeat of 1994, when the GOP netted 52 seats.

The Democrats who survived that debacle were by and large the ones who had safe seats. That means there are fewer swing-district Democrats vulnerable to GOP challengers this year. Public-opinion polls also suggest that Democrats have polished up their image. Since a October 1994 *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News issues survey, Democrats have improved their position vis-à-vis Republicans on the economy (where the GOP lead has totally disappeared), taxes, Social Security, and foreign policy. They continue to maintain huge leads on health care and the environment.

Republicans are well positioned to do more than take back the 9 seats they lost in 1996.

Republicans are nevertheless well positioned to do more than take back the 9 seats they lost in 1996. Since the Second World War, the sitting President's party has lost House seats in every off-year election. In addition, Republicans are winning the contributions game by a wide margin. At the end of August, the National Republican Congressional Committee had $7.4 million in hard cash available to candidates. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee had only $1.7 million, less than half what it had in each of the last two election cycles. This has forced Democrats to fight a defensive battle, shifting resources from promising challengers to wobbling incumbents—like Evans.

According to Federal Election Commission reports filed this summer, challenger Baker had more cash in the bank than his opponent. Evans has been in the GOP's crosshairs before, but never so clearly as now. He survived the Republican deluge of 1994, but slipped against first-time candidate Baker two years later. That November, President Clinton beat Bob Dole in the 17th Congressional District (CD) by 13 points; Evans, however, managed to win by only 5 points. This year Baker won't suffer from a drag at the top of the ticket; Republicans running for governor and the Senate in Illinois—George Ryan and Peter Fitzgerald—are poised to win smashing victories in November. "We consider this to be one of the best pickup opportunities in America this year," says Todd Harris of the NRCC.

Like Democrats everywhere, Evans will not be helped by the Clinton scandal. But most House races have more to do with local idiosyncrasies than broad national issues, and the Evans–Baker contest fits that mold. The 17th CD is in the northwestern part of Illinois, running along the Mississippi River and sharing a border with Iowa and Missouri. From the farmers who till the land to the union workers in Moline and Rock Island who build the tractors and combines the farmers use, at least 40 per cent of the district's economy is based on agriculture. And that's a conservative estimate. As the locals like to say, "If you eat, you're in agriculture."

The 39-year-old Mark Baker has a made-to-order political background for the media-driven 1990s: sales and television. His first job out of college had him hawking sausages for Oscar Meyer. Later he went into radio and television in Los Angeles, and he has the handsome, confident countenance of an anchorman. For several years, he hosted the 10 o'clock news on WGEM in Quincy, Ill., at the southern end of his district. His only real drawback is his height; at 5'8", he's a bit short for a man seeking public office nowadays. ("He could be governor if he were taller," says Peter Roff of GOPAC.)

Despite this drawback, Baker possesses two qualities indispensable to television politics: He knows how to make a sales pitch, and specifically how to do it over the airwaves.

Baker's image of youthful vigor contrasts sharply with that of the 47-year-old Lane Evans, who has long been known in Congress for his rumpled appearance and bad haircuts. Rep. Evans was first elected in 1982, when GOP primary voters ousted incumbent Tom Railsback, who had been fatally tainted by the Paula Parkinson lobbying scandal. Evans successfully portrayed himself as a hometown boy and Marine Corps veteran who would stand up for blue-collar workers. His steady stream of left-wing House votes did not fit his district's profile, especially on social issues. Yet his unswerving devotion to organized labor has kept him lodged in place. Never an electrifying campaigner, Evans has been hobbled since 1995 by Parkinson's disease, an illness that impairs muscle control (but not mental ability). He can no longer stand for any length of time without pain, and he says it's even difficult to smile at times.

If House races are mostly won at the micro level—How effective is the candidate? How much money has he raised?—they are also fought against a larger backdrop. The historic shift of the South toward the GOP, for instance, has given Republicans a big boost over the last decade (though the number of pickup possibilities has subsequently dwindled). Control of the House has allowed Republicans to create another seismic shift in their favor: the radical change in farm politics in the wake of the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act.

When Congress voted to phase out farm subsidies, it unleashed the awesome productivity of American farmers and took a swath of the heartland off the dole. For the first time since the New Deal, farmers were allowed to decide which crops they would plant and how many acres they would till without government interference. There were no more price supports or federal payments for letting land lie fallow. Unfortunately, this did not generate more sales. Instead, it led to oversupply at a time when demand was shrinking.

To work, Freedom to Farm must be complemented by freedom to trade. Farmers must have new markets pried open overseas, and so far that hasn't happened—thanks in part to politicians like Evans, who opposes virtually every free-trade initiative in Congress. The Democrats' solution to the problem involves a partial return to the old days of subsidies and, for the sake of security, some farmers appear willing to go along.

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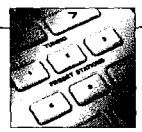

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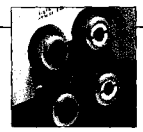

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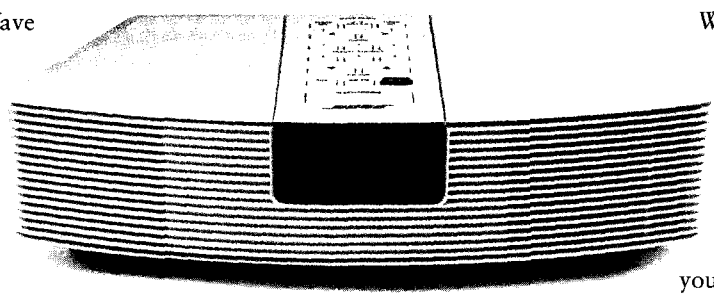

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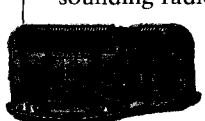

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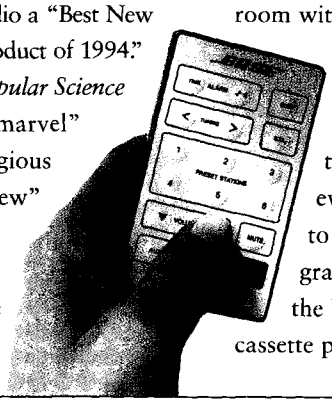

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The majority of farmers, however, would prefer to see Congress give the President fast-track trade-negotiating authority. At a nighttime gathering in an empty feed lot near Mt. Carroll on September 24, three dozen locals told Mark Baker of their bleak prospects. As a pair of cats chased each other around bales of hay and the smell of fresh manure filled the air, farmers complained about the price of corn, a parts-supplier worried because his customers are cutting back, and a barn-builder said business is way down. Here, in the birthplace of American isolationism, everyone present agreed that free trade is the key to rural America's future.

In the meantime, Baker hopes that Democrats will be turned off by the White House scandal and not go to the polls. A *Washington Post*/ABC News poll in September showed that likely voters are more critical of Bill Clinton's conduct than the public at large: 31 per cent of likely voters think Clinton should be impeached, versus 24 per cent of the general public. A Fabrizio–McLaughlin poll had a plurality of likely voters favoring Republicans for Congress, even though a plurality of registered voters favor Democrats.

The risk for Baker is that Evans's strong labor support will mobilize a core constituency during a low turnout year. More than 58,000 union members live in the district, and many of them appear to be volunteering for Evans at phone banks or on the streets. Baker hopes, however, that a substantial minority will come to realize that their jobs also rely on free trade. If protectionism forces farmers to go belly up, after all, there won't be much of a market for the equipment so many of the 17th District's union members manufacture. In any case, the fact that Evans is in such a tight race bodes ill for his party.

Earlier this year, Democrats in Washington were boasting that they would recapture the House. Republicans agreed, but for several months this spring there was a tangible uneasiness among the GOP. That has now vanished entirely. Rep. John Linder (R., Ga.), head of the NRCC, has consistently predicted a 10-to-15-seat GOP pickup in the House. "That's what I'm going to continue predicting," he said toward the end of September. Then, in a moment of frankness, he added, "but I'm feeling better than that." □

Establishment Cause

In Washington, the establishment is leading the fight to preserve racial preferences.

MICHAEL W. LYNCH

MARY Radcliffe knows about discrimination. This cocoa-colored daughter of the segregated South has experienced it all her life. As a child she was barred from buying ice cream at the whites-only store in Louisiana's St. Landry's Parish. She tells of a department-store clerk in Seattle refusing to fit her daughter for shoes, because he wouldn't kneel down before any black person. But, Mrs. Radcliffe reckons, no good comes from America's current policies of racial preferences: "If it's wrong for whites, it's wrong for people of color." And, as one of four co-chairmen of Washington's Initiative 200, which would end public-sector racial preferences in the Evergreen State, she's backing her words with action.

Mary Radcliffe is bracing herself for a rough month. The most recent statewide poll, conducted last month for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, showed that 53 per cent of likely voters are sympathetic to the initiative. But Mrs. Radcliffe has received cool receptions at speaking appearances in the predominantly liberal Greater Seattle area. And the preference cartel, composed of labor unions, old-style civil-rights groups, state and local politicians, representatives of big business and higher education, and even her Episcopalian parish, are mounting a well-financed campaign to preserve racial preferences. In theory, Washington, which is 89 per cent white, should be ripe for the anti-preference movement. Instead, the movement is facing what could be a painful and damaging loss—not because the public is unsympathetic, but because of the weight of the business and institutional forces arrayed against it.

The No!200 campaign is following closely the contours of the unsuccessful attempt in 1996 to defeat California's Proposition 209 (the California Civil Rights Initiative) and the successful effort to defeat Houston's Measure A. Specifically, No!200 is attempting to change the terms of debate. Instead of talking about the core issue of re-establishing equal treatment under the law, it is insisting that the initiative would resegregate society, ordering women back to the kitchen and kicking girls out of math and science classrooms.

Seattle Times publisher Frank Blethen has bought ads in his own paper insinuating that I-200 will shut down girls' soccer leagues. "Think back a couple of decades," admonishes the ad for Sunday, August 30. "You didn't see girls in soccer uniforms on school playfields . . . Today, girls excel in sports." In a similarly absurd allegation, University of Washington law professor Eric Schnapper claims in an op-ed that I-200 would prevent the state from making special efforts to obtain bone-marrow donations from minorities.

'They have shown a capacity to lie and distort that is unlike anything we experienced with Proposition 209.'

Ward Connerly, who chaired the CCRI campaign and whose ACRI (American Civil Rights Institute) is running educational ads in Washington State, says of the opponents of I-200, "They have shown a capacity to lie and distort that is unlike anything we experienced with 209." In addition to factual distortion, the pro-preference side in Washington has one tool California's forces of reaction didn't: a popular governor fighting their fight. Gov. Gary Locke is steadfastly opposed to I-200. In California, the leadership and tireless work of Gov. Pete Wilson kept much of big business neutral in the battle over Proposition 209; by contrast Gov. Locke's leadership makes it safe for corporations to bolster their spinelessness with dollars.

Mr. Lynch is Washington editor of Reason *magazine.*

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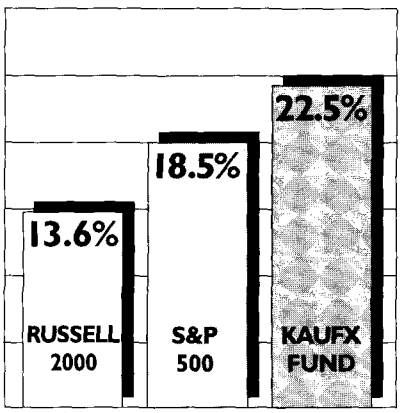

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Boeing, currently defending itself in court against several discrimination lawsuits, has ponied up $50,000 in a goodwill gesture to Jesse Jackson. Microsoft, citing the need for a diverse workforce, wrote a $25,000 check. Costco matched Microsoft's generosity, and Starbucks gave $10,000, matching a personal donation from its CEO. As of September 11, No!200 has raised $590,000. No!200's Michelle Ackerman estimates that $2.5 million will be enough to defeat the initiative.

For its part, the I-200 campaign is having a tough time raising cash. Corporations are staying away, although several corporate executives, including retired Nordstrom executive John Nordstrom, are supporting the campaign as individuals. In early September, the campaign had $150,000 on hand, after funding an expensive signature drive to ensure that voters would have a crack at the initiative on November 3. "I don't mind being outspent 2 to 1," says John Carlson, an I-200 campaign co-chair, who is running the day-to-day operations. "I can live with being outspent 3 to 1. But if we're outspent 6 to 1 we're in trouble, and if we don't start raising a lot of money soon, that's the advantage they will have."

Garnering endorsements is proving difficult as well. With the "women's issue" a focus of debate, an endorsement from popular Republican congressman Jennifer Dunn would be enormously helpful. But Rep. Dunn remains reticent, claiming she has a blanket policy of not weighing in on state issues. (When asked by reporters, she says she will vote for I-200.)

Trailing badly in the money race, facing opposition from a united corporate community, and trying to communicate to voters when the owner of the state's largest newspaper is running ads against the initiative, why does John Carlson sport an optimistic smile?

The polls, for one thing, although support is expected to slip as the distortion campaign escalates. (Support has fallen from 64 per cent in June to 53 per cent in September.) More important, the I-200 campaign won a critical legal victory when a judge denied a challenge to the wording of the ballot question: "Shall government be prohibited from discriminating or granting preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, education, and contracting?" In Houston, the pro-preference forces, led by Mayor Bob Lanier, employed misleading ballot language to defeat Measure A, claiming it would "end the use of affirmative action," instead of ending race- and sex-based preferences. (On account of this chicanery, a judge recently threw out the results of the Houston election.)

The I-200 campaign also has a diverse corps of exponents. Mary Radcliffe is eager to hit the debating circuit. Pat Herbold, a long-time political activist whose husband is Microsoft's Chief Operating Officer, is also a co-chairman, penning op-eds and hitting the speaking circuit in earnest as November 3 nears.

But fundamentally, John Carlson is optimistic because his message is a moral one. "They may have big government, big business, and big labor, but we have the people," says Carlson. "[We'll win] by telling the truth and sticking to the issue." Opponents will do neither, which is why they too are optimistic. □

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Gentle Jeb

Whatever's going on in Texas, Florida has a Bush who shows what 'compassionate conservative' means.

CRISTOPHER RAPP

NEWBERRY, FLA.

"WHO would have thought that in Alachua County this many people would come out for the Republican candidate for governor?" The question, asked by the candidate himself, had an easy answer: no one. Both the Weather Channel (Hurricane Georges was making his way up Florida's Gulf Coast) and local history suggested a small turnout for Jeb Bush's campaign barbecue. Democrats outnumber Republicans 2 to 1 in this northern county. Voters here picked Bill Clinton over Jeb's dad by a whopping 20 percentage points, and they chose Lawton Chiles over Jeb himself in the 1994 governor's race by an even larger margin.

But this day, more than two thousand people showed up, the largest crowd in living memory for a Republican in the area, and more than ten times the number his opponent, Buddy MacKay, has drawn here this year. "This is what it's all about," said Bush, "throwing conventions aside."

Four years ago Bush ran as a self-described "head-banging conservative," calling for the abolition of the Department of Education and proposing that all tax increases be submitted to a popular referendum. He still considers himself a conservative, but this time his tune is more Hootie than heavy metal. He's campaigning hard in black churches, poor neighborhoods, and public schools—not to mention Democratic strongholds like Alachua County—and his speeches combine appeals for less government with vows to fight urban poverty and child abuse. He's racking up endorsements from Democratic officials and black leaders, in the process making MacKay, a thirty-year veteran of Florida politics, look like a novice. And at a time when complacency has leeched the life out of the state's Democratic establishment, Bush threatens to boot it out of Tallahassee altogether.

Bush's political moment has been four years in the making. After a bruising primary in 1994, he faced incumbent Gov. Lawton Chiles, a giant of Florida politics who has been in elected office since 1958. Chiles beat him by less than 64,000 votes, the closest gubernatorial election in state history. The strong showing instantly pegged Bush as the front-runner for 1998—even before it was revealed that Chiles–MacKay campaign workers, pretending to be from senior-citizen and tax-watchdog groups, had made more than 70,000 phone calls to voters in the final weeks of the race, warning falsely that Bush planned to "abolish Social Security." "A lot of people felt that Jeb Bush was actually elected but for a minor technicality," says University of Florida political scientist Richard Scher, "and since then he's acted as if he's the rightful heir."

In 1994, Bush advocated requiring state prisoners to serve at least 85 per cent of their sentences before being eligible for parole (at the time the average was just 37 per cent), and in 1995 he worked with Republican legislators to get a law to this effect passed. When the state unemployment-compensation fund ran a surplus, the legislature adopted his proposal to give businesses a refund, to the tune of $162 million. Bush traveled around the state promoting charter-school legislation, and in 1996 he joined with T. Willard Fair, president of the Urban League of Greater Miami, to found Florida's first charter school in one of Dade County's toughest neighborhoods. The contrast with the listless Chiles administration was such, says John Thrasher, the incoming Republican Speaker of the Florida House, that "Jeb was almost a phantom governor."

BUSH'S success underscored the turmoil within the Florida Democratic Party. For decades, the Democrats could rely on party loyalty and the sheer charisma of icons like Chiles and governor-turned-senator Bob Graham. But in recent years they have slipped, and in 1996 the GOP took the state legislature for the first time since the Grant Administration. Republicans hold the majority of Florida's seats in Congress, and they may take five of six elected state cabinet positions this fall. And now the Democrats are racially divided: in January, Democratic legislators ousted State Rep. Willie Logan from the party leadership and replaced him with a white woman, alienating the Black Caucus. A Bush win could leave the nation's fourth largest state almost entirely in Republican hands.

"We have compassion fatigue," Bush said in Alachua, delivering what has become his credo, "because we've defined compassion by how much money we've been willing to send to Tallahassee and Washington." Properly understood, "compassion is defined as 'suffering with,' acting on a sense of consciousness when you've seen the hurting and the misery around you."

This sounds like a less wonky version of Jack Kemp; Bush's proposals complete the analogy. On education, Florida's most pressing issue, his plan calls for grading schools based on their students' improvement on standardized tests. A school that moves up a grade, or that receives an A, will get more autonomy and funding. Students at a school that receives an F for two consecutive years will get vouchers. Bush, who is pro-life, favors duplicating foster-care and adoption reforms that have been successful in Sarasota, where nonprofit groups provide all services, resulting in a 65 per cent increase in adoptions. He tackles gun control, normally a difficult issue for Republicans, by calling for increased sentences for those who use guns in a violent crime.

This time, Jeb Bush's tune is more Hootie than heavy metal.

Bush's comprehensive urban-renewal proposal seems most representative of his campaign. The plan uses small-scale government activism to achieve conservative goals—small-business loans, support for faith-based ministries, beefed-up drug and crime prevention—along with warmer and fuzzier ones, like new-parent counseling and a statewide mentoring program. One component involves turning over foreclosed or abandoned houses to qualified poor families (drug-free, crime-free, at least one parent em-

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ployed), which would be required to pay fair market rent and refurbish the house. If the family fulfills these obligations, after five years the home is theirs.

These sorts of policies have helped Bush capitalize on the Willie Logan flap, and he has won the endorsements of a number of black officials, notably State Sen. Jim Hargrett, and Logan himself. After winning only 4 per cent of the black vote in 1994, Bush is now expected to get as much as 20 per cent.

Outsiders have worried that Bush is moving too far to the center, but Florida conservatives are with him. "Jeb is showing how we can apply conservative principles to practical, everyday situations," says State Rep. Victor Crist. "Being a conservative doesn't mean you are cheap and cold-hearted, it means being compassionate and responsible in utilizing limited resources." Still, the question remains: Can the kinder, gentler Jeb say no when he has to?

Buddy MacKay hasn't helped his own chances. During his three decades in public life he has earned a reputation for moderation and competence but not brilliance, and his unfocused campaign is drawing comparisons to Bob Dole's failed 1996 presidential run. Recently he has shown signs of life, attacking Bush on vouchers ("They will devastate the public-school system") and unveiling his own education and inner-city proposals. But his proposals, introduced *after* Bush's, have a me-too quality. "The people who know Buddy think very highly of him," says Jack Latona, a Fort Lauderdale City Commissioner and a Democrat who has endorsed Bush. "It's just you look at him and say, where are we going?"

Willard Fair brings up a visit Bush paid recently to a small group of migrant workers in the farm town of Immokalee. "He's so far ahead in the polls, he didn't have to go out there for 41 people," says Fair. "He didn't bring any cameras, and he didn't make any promises, he just listened to what they had to say. That's raw compassion."

Although Bush's commanding lead—52 per cent to 37 per cent in the most recent Mason–Dixon poll—is likely to shrink as election day approaches, his campaign is beginning to have the feel of a victory tour. "People love him," says John Thrasher, who has accompanied Bush on parts of the trail. "It's like walking around with Elvis."

Maybe so, but was the King ever this *nice*? □

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Fighting Irish

Our infatuation with all things Irish is a hopeful sign in post-modern America.

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

RUMORS that the Irish Republic has considered changing its name to "Frank McCourt" are without foundation. Yet in the present craze for everything Irish, not least Mr. McCourt's memoir-turned-cottage-industry, *Angela's Ashes*, something odd is going on.

The mania for Ireland that has spread over American culture in the late Nineties isn't as strange as would be a mania for, say, Guatemala or Bulgaria. After all, 14 per cent of Americans claim Irish ancestry. On the other hand, most of the folk who have been devouring Irish books, TV series, tours, and dance shows are not of that number. Of the friends and acquaintances who have enthused to me about *Riverdance* or *Lord of the Dance*, *Angela's Ashes* or *A Monk Swimming*, none is Irish even in part.

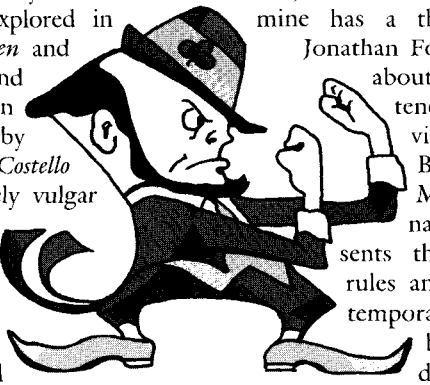
The craze commenced with *Riverdance*, Michael Flatley's extravaganza of Irish jigs and reels rechoreographed as if for the Rockettes, performed by men in black hot pants and women in black brassieres. First seen in the U.S. at Radio City Music Hall in early 1996, *Riverdance* begot *Lord of the Dance*, currently being performed by several cloned troupes in America and Europe. The franchise deal has allowed Mr. Flatley, by now a superstar, to retire, a very rich man, to Monaco.

Angela's Ashes, concerning Mr. McCourt's impoverished childhood in Limerick, appeared later the same year and has resided near the top of the *New York Times* best-seller list for 107 weeks. In June of this year it was joined there by *A Monk Swimming*, a sort of sequel by McCourt's younger brother Malachy, which picks up where *Ashes* left off. The youngest McCourt brother, Alphie, is at work on his own memoir, while middle brother Michael has startled the literary world by declining to follow suit. Visitors to Limerick can take a McCourt Tour of the locales described in *Ashes*, just as visitors to Dublin tour the real-life settings for *Ulysses*.

And the proprietors of the McCourt Tour can be assured of good business: in the past four years, tourism to Ireland from the U.S. has doubled. When they go, no doubt a large portion of those American tourists carry in their suitcases still another best-seller: Thomas Cahill's *How the Irish Saved Civilization*, in which Cahill explains how Irish monks preserved the classics after the Roman Empire expired.

Naturally Hollywood has cashed in on the phenomenon. If the details of Ireland's political discontents remain as opaque as ever to most Americans, that's not because we haven't watched enough movies about twentieth-century Irish history, from *Michael Collins*, with Liam Neeson as the outstanding martyr of the Troubles, to *The Devil's Own*, with Brad Pitt as an IRA heartthrob on a shopping trip to New York for surface-to-air missiles.

Another cinematic theme—working-class Irish Americans residing in outer-borough New York City or in South Boston—was first explored in *The Brothers McMullen* and *Good Will Hunting*, and this season has been taken up mightily by television. There's *Costello* on Fox: a gruesomely vulgar and unfunny sitcom, sure to be a hit, about an Irish-American bar girl in South Boston. It will soon be joined by a couple of dramatic series, on NBC and CBS, both about Irish-American brothers: a trio in Hell's Kitchen in Manhattan (cop, priest, criminal) and a quartet in Boston (cop, cop, cop, fireman).



Broadway has been equally awash in Eire, notably the doted-upon *Beauty Queen of Leenane* (frustrated love in a small Irish town); also *St. Nicholas* (about an Irish drama critic), *The Cripple of Inishman* (a differently abled Irishman goes to America), not to mention *The Irish . . . and How They Got That Way* (a revue by the inevitable Frank McCourt).

What's it all about, Alphie? Why can America not get its fill of Ireland? Yes, *Angela's Ashes* is a terrific book, though technically it falls into the already overfull publishing category of the Misery Memoir. No miserable aspect of life for a poor Limerick boy goes unnoted by Mr. McCourt. Yet the misery is told with great charm and humor and in a voice that comes through as distinctly as if you were listening to a soundtrack. McCourt does this not the easy way, with heavy dialect, but in little things like the Irish habit of employing the definite article where we wouldn't. "I thought," Frankie recalls after he sees his father sobbing in a pub at the death of Frankie's baby brother, "if you're a man you can cry only when you have the black stuff [before you] that is called the pint." It's that wonderful *the* in front of pint that makes you hear Ireland.

Malachy McCourt's book falls short of his brother's, being mainly a string of stories all more or less summarizable as follows: Arr-here's-another-crazy-thing-I-did-when-I-was-a-lad. And, apart from *The Brothers McMullen*, it's downhill from there, reaching the bottom of the Guinness barrel with *Costello*.

If it is not strictly artistic achievement we are drawn to in Ireland and the Irish, what then? An English friend of mine has a theory. He points to Jonathan Foreman's article in *NR* about Hollywood's recent tendency to make movie villains English ("Big Bad Brits," April 20). More than any other nation, England represents the great tradition of rules and standards that contemporary Americans have been led to fear and despise. In the Irish, says this Brit, we find the antithesis of that tradition. As Thomas Cahill puts it, the Irish in our imagination "are wild, feckless, and charming, or morose, repressed, and corrupt," but in any case "not especially civilized."

It's a plausible interpretation, buttressed by the queer neo-pagan nature mysticism of *Riverdance*—a plummy voice narrates between dances with irrelevant patter about eagles soaring high above the golden plain and thunder and

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lightning battling on the rocks—and by what some take to be the anti-Catholicism of *Angela's Ashes*. (McCourt makes fun of everything in Limerick, including the piety of its citizens. To the sort of Catholic who if he were Jewish would join the Anti-Defamation League, this will appear sinister.)

Why can America not get its fill of Ireland?

THE problem with the theory is that England plays only a modest role in these books, movies, and so on. The opposition that really leaps out is not between the Irish and the English but between Ireland and something much closer to home. Cahill gets it nearly right. At least as we picture them, the Irish are a pre-civilized, or rather a pre-modern, people. And nowadays, the distinction between modern and pre-modern can be crystallized in a word: passion.

In our minds, the Irish do nothing—say nothing, think nothing, drink nothing—in moderation. Their capacity to hate, for instance, is world famous: they hate the English, the Presbyterians (if you're Catholic), the Catholics (if you're Presbyterian). When Frankie McCourt's dad gets crashing drunk, as he regularly does, he comes home booming songs of Irish martyrs, yanks his little boys out of bed, and makes them swear they'll die for Ireland. The Irish are willing, even eager to die for their country—and to kill for it. The best moment in *Michael Collins* comes when Liam Neeson, as the revolutionary in a three-piece business suit, tells his men that they must now resolve, however reluctantly, to execute anyone who collaborates with the British. The Irish are brutally serious about their politics, no less than about their religion. In the moment before the trigger is squeezed, Collins's executioners permit him to say a prayer, and they respond, "May the Lord have mercy on your soul."

The contrast with our own lives, the paleness of our passions, breaks your heart. Americans feel strongly about some things: sports, physical fitness, personal convenience. "Road Rage" is how we describe the phenomenon in which a motorist flies into a violent pique at another motorist who has cut him off. We rage at little else. Not politics nor religion. Oh, the odd newspaper columnist will feign furious disgust at Bill Clinton's exploits. Generally, though, Americans regard events in Washington, D.C., with a mixture of cynicism and boredom. As for religious faith, at least in our big cities any expression of earnestness about G-d is met with polite embarrassment.

Embarrassment in the presence of passion may be the characteristic emotion of modern life. As Thomas Cahill explains of the transition from the classical to the Christian world view, Plato equated virtue, and thus salvation, with knowledge. Augustine overturned the equation, regarding salvation as an unmerited gift. For us, virtue consists of a certain unadorned sleekness: cool, aerobically shaped, blandly disinterested. The emblem of our emotional life is a bottle of imported spring water, ubiquitous totem of the yuppie as he migrates between gym and office. For the Irish, it is "the pint."

And God bless them for it. In this season of cynicism that began the day we first heard the name "Monica Lewinsky," the passion for Ireland is good news. Even *Riverdance* should cheer us up. If Irishmen can dance about in black hot pants for two hours, while Americans sit and watch them without the slightest embarrassment and applaud vigorously at the end, there may be hope for us after all. □

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THE LAST SEDUCTION

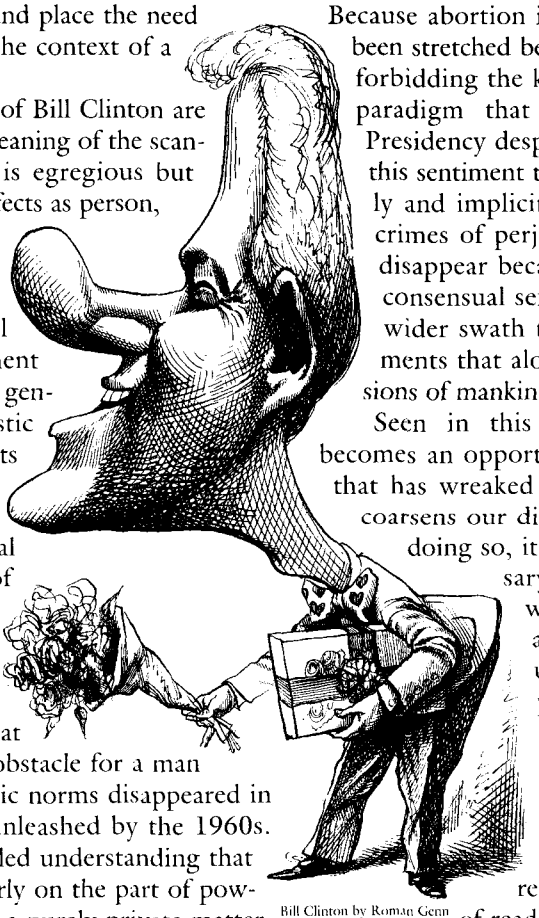
Republic of Lies

Clinton's failures aren't personal, they're symptoms of the welfare state's late-decadent stage.

JOHN O. MCGINNIS

THE struggle over President Clinton's conduct will not be ended even by an eventual resignation or impeachment and conviction. As with all signal events in American history, the larger meaning of his actions and of the nation's response will be debated for generations to come. This is the reason why it is essential for conservatives to step forward and place the need for President Clinton's ouster in the context of a campaign for American renewal.

The Democrats who are critical of Bill Clinton are attempting to narrow the public meaning of the scandal by arguing that his conduct is egregious but aberrational—a reflection of his defects as person, not of any defects in our regime. But Mr. Clinton's conduct, and indeed his whole persona, is bound up in the agenda of sexual permissiveness and big government that the Left has been pursuing for generations—often with the enthusiastic support of the very same Democrats who are now denouncing him. His own repeated claim of privacy for conduct in and around the Oval Office—the sanctum sanctorum of our Republic—is the logical conclusion of the Left's effort to remove public norms about sexuality from civic life.



Bill Clinton by Roman Genn

It was only a few decades ago that divorce was considered a serious obstacle for a man seeking the Presidency. Such public norms disappeared in the maelstrom of sexual license unleashed by the 1960s. Before then, there had been a settled understanding that aberrant sexual behavior, particularly on the part of powerful men, could not be treated as a purely private matter. Accordingly, from the beginning of the Republic to the middle of this century, a complex web of public standards developed to hold passions in check and protect women and children from the results of sexual excess. These included the shunning in polite society of men and women known to be promiscuous. Such norms were not in tension with our legal culture; indeed, they were sometimes supported by the state through such regulations as strict divorce laws.

Today, however, intellectuals, the media, and to some extent the public are hostile to such norms. They believe that sexual activity is so important—indeed, almost sacred—that it should sweep away every other value. In sexual matters, in fact, law is now employed principally to preclude older legal and social norms from being applied. Because abortion is related to sex, our Constitution has been stretched beyond recognition to eliminate old laws forbidding the killing of a fetus. It is the logic of this paradigm that allowed Mr. Clinton to win the Presidency despite his widely suspected adultery. It is this sentiment to which his current supporters explicitly and implicitly appeal when they suggest that his crimes of perjury and obstruction of justice should disappear because in this case they relate to acts of consensual sex. The norm of "privacy" cuts an ever wider swath to preclude the moral and legal judgments that alone can constrain the most unruly passions of mankind.

Seen in this light, President Clinton's conduct becomes an opportunity to right the inversion of values that has wreaked havoc on our society. Sexual license coarsens our discourse and dissolves our families. In doing so, it deprives civilization of its most necessary restraints: the self-critical language with which we hold ourselves in check and the permanent affections that bind us to one another. Despite the Left's professed concern for the poor, the disappearance of such restraints harms them most of all because they generally lack the resources to recover from the disastrous consequences of easy virtue. The hard truth is that each age must reinvent for itself the Scarlet Letter—a set of ready social sanctions and public judgments that restrain behavior like President Clinton's and prevent men like him from easily gaining positions of moral authority.

The lying at the heart of the Lewinsky scandal vividly illustrates the danger of allowing philanderers to flourish in public life. Sexual debauchery is the best school for the

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modern demagogue. Seducers by their very nature are skilled liars, persuading each woman that she is the only one. They are thus perfectly suited to the principal task of the politician in the modern welfare state: persuading each interest group that its concerns are closest to his heart. Rakes are experts not only at misleading with words but also at stirring up the false emotions that in a television age facilitate political seduction in the living room of each voter.

Thus Clinton's crescendo of lies in the Paula Jones suit, before the grand jury, and to the public at large is not an anomaly but part of his core political persona. Clinton was an inveterate and promiscuous liar long before he met Monica Lewinsky. He has built an entire political career on shading and bending the truth. He said that affirmative action should be mended, but he has left almost every federal affirmative-action program untouched. He tried to blame Congress for the largest tax increase in American history—a tax increase he himself had proposed. And even when he does not lie outright, he is a master of concealment—of proposing subsidies and regulations without revealing their costs.

If we are to prevent future Clintons from attaining high office we must understand how our political culture encourages the election of such impresarios of deceit. Of course, politicians have never been perfect. But at the founding of the Republic we had a structure of government that encouraged a better and more honest class of leaders. At that time the Federal Government was limited to a relatively few functions, such as providing for the common defense, maintaining a common currency, and delivering the mail. These activities furnished what economists now call public goods. Such goods redound to everyone's benefit and do not represent transfer payments from one group to another. As a result, the public genuinely wanted to elect honest and accomplished men, the "first characters of the nation," as George Washington called them, because everyone shared an interest in seeing these tasks well performed. Since the tasks were few, citizens could more easily monitor performance and detect deception.

Seducers by their very nature are skilled liars. They are thus perfectly suited to the principal task of the politician in the modern welfare state.

Our political structure today is radically different. The Federal Government is not limited to sustaining a few public goods. It spends nearly a quarter of the national income, most of it on transfer payments from one group of citizens to another, like Social Security, Medicaid, welfare, and subsidies for powerful interest groups. Because we do not have a flat tax, the tax code also is shaped by preferences for various groups. The Federal Government has thus become a vast engine of redistribution among its citizens.

This dissolution of the system of government instituted by the Framers of our Constitution has brought about a major change in the kind of politician who gets elected. In a state that encourages redistribution, citizens naturally support someone who will give them a share of the loot rather than trying to find someone of good character and judgment. Even citizens for whom integrity remains a paramount concern have more difficulty in monitoring the actions of their politicians, because the government does so many things.

AN ignorant citizenry under a government focused on redistribution generates a class of politicians skilled at taking advantage of the public. Under such a regime, the most successful politician is the one who goes to each interest group and says, in effect, The government will give you more than it takes. These statements cannot all be true. In fact, because the governmental wealth transfers waste a great deal of money and depress productivity, most, if not all, are false. Certainly, politicians are always concealing the full truth about their programs—the hidden costs of their regulations and the tax increases that will be necessary to finance their schemes. Indeed, many of our principal social-welfare institutions are built on falsehoods. Social Security, for example, was sold to the people as a "trust fund" that would secure their own retirement savings; in fact, it places the load of one generation's retirement on the back of the next.

The very structure of our government thus nourishes a political culture of concealment in which politicians like Bill Clinton thrive. In his essay "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell demonstrated the relation between public discourse and governmental structure. Totalitarian governments give birth to a few big lies like "War is Peace." Social democracy too has a characteristic relation to public language: the welfare state is the father of endless little lies and half-truths—a hundred kinds of pettifoggery to obscure the falsity of the claim that there *is* a free lunch.

Clinton's specific acts of lying thus reveal the general defects of our polity. In addition to new public norms on sexuality, structural reform of government is necessary to decrease the future likelihood of successful demagogues. If Republicans take both the Presidency and Congress in 2000, they can start refocusing government on producing a few public goods. In that way they will engender a political culture that will discourage lying and call forth more statesmen of the kind America once knew.

Thomas Cole, a magnificent exemplar of the Hudson River School, painted a haunting series of pictures intended as a warning for his adopted country. Entitled "The Course of Empire" and now displayed at the New York Historical Society, they show the progress of a state from an Arcadian republic to a bloated empire rife with bacchanalia. Destruction and desolation round out the sequence. The United States has actually followed the predicted trajectory with the rise in power and size of the state and a correlative decline in public morality. The blessing of the Lewinsky scandal is that President Clinton's actions have dramatized this warning more than even so fine a painting could. By personifying the principal pathologies of our regime, Bill Clinton may yet end up providing a service to the nation he has so dishonored. □

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Regrettable Van Susteren

JONAH GOLDBERG

THE smoke has not yet cleared enough to determine exactly which part of the civic culture has been damaged the most by the Clinton Presidency. But surely one noxious outcome of Bill Clinton's effrontery has been to advance the "legal analyst" to the highest niche in television's pundit taxonomy.

Increasingly, the pundit class is dominated by people trained primarily in how to keep guilty people out of jail. Thus these new pundits are especially gifted in the techniques of equivocation, confusion, distraction, and blame shifting. So, largely thanks to the lawyers in this Administration of lawyers, and to their colleagues on TV, we have a scandal that is called complex ("What are High Crimes and Misdemeanors really?") when it is actually quite simple ("He's a pig").

The dogs of law were first unleashed on the viewing public by the decision to allow cameras in the courtroom, together with the boom in all-news networks. They found their supply of raw meat in the televised trials of William Kennedy Smith, the Menendez brothers, and, of course, O. J. Simpson. Their influence was as deeply pernicious as it was straightforward: "Put the system on trial." They made Davids out of alleged rapists, Goliaths out of venerable institutions, and jokes out of deadly serious moral points. Jill Abramson claimed that her clients, the Menendez brothers, did not blow their parents' heads off. Instead the boys merely unloaded a shotgun in their direction.

Greta Van Susteren by Roman Genn

But the Clinton scandal is something new. Using the independent counsel as their entree, the lawyers have replaced the philosophers, journalists, and politicians as the priestly class charged with reading the entrails of the Clinton Presidency. En masse they have slithered from the shadow of O.J. to become the Greek chorus of the Clinton scandal. It should not be surprising, then, that the high priestess of Clinton apologists is the first among equals from the O.J. punditocracy: Greta Van Susteren, co-host of CNN's *Burden of Proof* and ubiquitous CNN legal analyst. She is, thanks to CNN's global presence, the international poster girl for all that is wrong with American political commentary.

Miss Van Susteren distinguished herself during the O. J. Simpson trial by muddying the waters of Simpson's crystal-clear guilt by picking at procedural nits. This was a clever marketing tactic—if every intelligent person in the world thinks X, television producers will seek out and exalt someone who argues for Y, all in an effort to provide "balance." Miss Van Susteren became a passionate advocate for Simpson—although she often denied it. She was masterly at importing a courtroom technique into the television studio: the moral equivalence of facts. According to this credo, an almost comical abundance of DNA evidence carries no more weight than one detective's racist comments ten years before the murder in question. As Felix Frankfurter once observed, "To some lawyers, all facts are created equal."

While this kind of argumentation is despicable, we make allowances for it in the courtroom because of our admirable devotion to due process, especially in capital cases. But Greta Van Susteren and her colleagues have carried this mode of analysis into the political arena. It has had a lobotomizing effect on civic discourse. For example, on September 21 on *Larry King Live* Judge Robert Bork asserted that a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court would be, and should be, impeached if he was sexually serviced by an intern in his chambers—even if he never lied about it. That someone should be punished for something that is not a crime flummoxed Miss Van Susteren to the point of incoherence, "Maybe if he's a bachelor, may—have—what if he's a . . . bachelor? . . . as consenting adults?"

There was a time when poor manners and dishonorable behavior were judged as reprehensible as committing a crime. In *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, Claude Rains tries to commit suicide on the Senate floor because he has disgraced himself, not because he's going to jail. Today if one has violated every tenet of decency but stopped short of violating criminal law—a constantly moving goalpost—then one is merely expressing oneself (like Larry Flint) or minding one's own business (like David Cash, the vile Berkeley student who stood aside as his friend raped and murdered a young girl). We are greeted constantly with the images of scoundrels triumphantly leaving courthouses celebrating the fact that their repugnant behavior was found not to have technically violated the law.

Now the President of the United States benefits from this new standard. During the seven long months when Bill Clinton interrupted the business of government far more severely than any "government shutdown," and allowed the entire Executive Branch to lie for him, Greta Van Susteren was his chief cheerleader. The President was just another perp, with no obligation other than staying out of the orange jumpsuit of the federal penitentiary. She argued time and again that the President should be praised for "standing on his rights" and that he has no obligation to clear the air about whether or not he's a scoundrel. "Had I been the President's lawyer," she said, "I would have urged him to fight this all the way to the United States Supreme Court."

In the end, all the legalese may simply be a con. Miss Van Susteren is pathological in her insistence that she is

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not a journalist. She asserts that she is a lawyer first and foremost and just concerned with "arguing the evidence." This is plain dishonesty. Say what you will about the serpentine James Carville or even Geraldo "I want to hug the President" Rivera, at least their biases are open for inspection. The legal pundits claim in an aw-shucks style that they are simply stating "the law." This infuriates lawyers who actually care about the validity of the law. Miss Van Susteren often suggested that there was no precedent for a President to testify. But there are numerous recent examples of Presidents offering testimony, including Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. Miss Van Susteren suggests that everyone ranking higher than the White House janitor has executive privilege, although the judges before whom the question has been brought scoff at the notion and hand Kenneth Starr courtroom victories.

Greta Van Susteren elicits strong feelings, which usually translate into high ratings.

Miss Van Susteren recently observed of Clinton's testimony, "There was no perjury. . . . I mean is the President obligated to make out the case for Paula Jones's lawyers?" According to Stuart Taylor, writing in *National Journal*, "The most charitable interpretation of such stuff is that Van Susteren had read neither the Jan. 17 deposition transcript replete with unambiguous perjuries—nor the Starr Report, which provides so-far-unrebutted proof of those perjuries and powerful evidence that Clinton resumed perjuring on Aug. 17." We can forgive Paul Begala's distortions of the truth on behalf of Bill Clinton, but should CNN's leading legal analyst fall in the same category?

Greta Van Susteren elicits strong feelings, which usually translate into high ratings. She is a ubiquitous presence on CNN, constantly on the air even when *Burden of Proof* isn't. She co-hosts the show with Roger Cossack, who is at best like the silent partner from Penn and Teller: a silent straight man whose interruptions are only permitted to allow Van Susteren to take a breath or for comic relief. To explain Miss Van Susteren's perspective, many critics point to her real partner. James Coale, her husband as well as her law partner, is a self-described "ambulance chaser" and has enthusiastically earned himself one of the most nefarious reputations in the country. In 1984 he acquired the nickname "Bhopal Coale" by being the first lawyer to hop on a plane to India to sign up gas-leak victims who couldn't even read their retainer documents.

American Lawyer magazine called him "a symbol for everything wrong with the plaintiff's bar." In 1987 the same magazine awarded Coale its Most Frivolous Suit Award: He had sued his tailor, on the grounds that the sub-par work on his shirts had subjected him to "public humiliation . . . severe emotional distress, and embarrassment." The West Virginia Bar tried to disbar both James Coale and Greta Van Susteren for their allegedly unethical behavior in soliciting the families of coal-mine accident victims, among others. Coale's repeated unapologetic defenses of his professional practices are true to form: "Everything I've done is permissible under the First Amendment."

This attitude highlights the deeper sympathy between Greta Van Susteren and Bill Clinton. Trial lawyers are the President's most loyal constituency—and not just because he employs so many of them. They contribute vast amounts of money to his campaigns and to the Democratic Party generally. Indeed, when one looks at the lawyers who are his most ardent defenders they are trial lawyers, starting with the wildly biased Larry Pozner, President of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. Those lawyers who are more critical of Clinton's behavior—Robert Bork, Jonathan Turley, James Stewart—tend to be academics or self-described journalists. If Miss Van Susteren and all those lesser lights who imitate her on the various television shows claim that their first allegiance is to the legal profession rather than to journalism, is it any wonder they are wild defenders of the President?

When Bill Clinton announced that he would have a Cabinet that "looks like America," he must have thought that 90 per cent of Americans had passed the bar exam. For quite some time he relied on Jeremy Bentham's adage: "Lawyers are the only persons in whom ignorance of the law is not punished." Had Bentham lived two centuries later he might have said, "Television lawyers." □

Rogue State

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

HOUDINI. Rasputin. The Artful Dodger. The names that conservatives give to Bill Clinton testify both to his agile survival abilities and to their own frustrations. Poison him, stab him, shoot him, push the corpse over Niagara Falls in a barrel—and up he sails over the roiling waters, wafted effortlessly skyward on rising approval ratings.

The evidence that he engaged in adultery, perjury, and obstruction of justice is plain and overwhelming. One would describe it as undeniable—if Clinton did not deny it. He should be lurking guiltily inside a bunkered-down White House. Instead, the First Perjurer tours the nation, raising funds and basking in applause from sympathetic crowds.

Who ever imagined that impeachable offenses would prove popular? It is only a matter of time, surely, before pundits begin to suggest that the Republicans are "in trouble" over their defense of marriage, truthfulness, the justice system, and the U.S. Constitution.

When that happens, the temptation for the Right and for Republicans will be to denounce the American people as shameless, immoral, and worshipping the Golden Dow. But while a good Jeremiad might raise Republicans' spirits, it would also depress their ratings. Above all, it would not help them to grasp why Clinton invariably escapes their clutches.

The first step to understanding the Clinton phenomenon is to stop hating Clinton. Because conservatives in general and Republicans in particular loathe Clinton, they find it

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almost impossible to see why he has not been destroyed by the evidence of his abuse of power. Yet the reason is obvious.

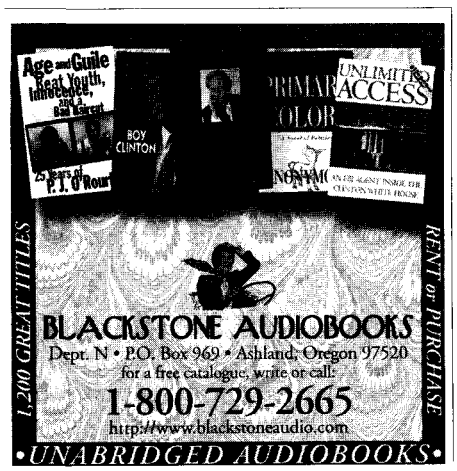
Clinton is likable. Indeed, he is a likable rogue. Such figures appear in all our lives and they are a staple of fiction, in particular theater and the movies. Think of such varied examples as Falstaff, Professor Harold Hill in *The Music Man*, Alfred Doolittle in Shaw's *Pygmalion*, and Flashman in the novels by George MacDonald Fraser. All these are people who behave badly but with charm. We know that we ought to disapprove of them, but we cannot bring ourselves to dislike them.

Now, a likable rogue cannot be damaged by revelations of his roguishness. The audience has already winked back at him in complicity and wants him to get away with it. Any new roguishness is met with indulgent chuckles. And this complicity is especially ensnaring in matters of sex.

Most men are uneasily aware that their own sexual past will not withstand rigorous moral scrutiny. And even though women have a better statistical claim to virtue in practice, their favorite reading—the Harlequin bodice-ripper—suggests that their imaginations are somewhat more promiscuous. Here it is relevant to note that the womanizer is a special edition of the rogue. Women like womanizers; if they did not, the womanizers would be merely lechers. And Mr. Clinton is a more potent womanizer than even he knows, because his seductions are still more numerous in the voting booth than in the bedroom, bathroom, or hallway.

So it was a mistake for Republicans to think that the raw details of Mr. Clinton's sexual shenanigans would make him despised and unpopular. Very few Americans may have played Hide the Cigar, but most of them have done *something* they would not like to be questioned about on television. *Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,/Who never to himself hath said/Gosh, I hope no one ever finds out about this*. It was this unease, rather than puritan disgust, that Mr. Clinton's testimony to the grand jury evoked. It was in this nervously indulgent moral atmosphere that his lies and perjury were explained away. And it was his apparent composure under the stress of cross-examination that made him all the more likable.

Not only is Mr. Clinton likable but—still better—he apparently likes *us*. His desire to win over everyone he meets, including known enemies, is notorious. In the therapeutic language of the day, he calls his charm "empathy" and he wants us to examine his actions through the lens of personal understanding rather than that of public judgment. There is a certain shrewdness in that, too. By feeling our pain, he laid down a marker. Many Americans feel a duty to reciprocate and read the independent counsel's report in an empathetic light as a tale of Starr-crossed lovers in teenland.



Almost the only antidote to the charm of the likable rogue, in fact, is the suspicion that he is not amiably roguish at all but cold, vicious, selfish, and hostile under the veneer of charm. Significantly, the moment when Mr. Clinton's popularity wobbled most vulnerably was following his August 17 speech when he came over to the cameras as cold, vicious, hostile, etc. It took some time for him to recover from that brief moment of self-destructive candor.

Mr. Clinton's most dangerous opponent is neither Kenneth Starr nor Newt Gingrich, but Dick Morris.

Similarly, Mr. Clinton's most dangerous opponent is neither Kenneth Starr nor Newt Gingrich nor any other Republican, but Dick Morris. Clinton's former advisor has consistently emphasized those aspects of the Clinton scandals which reveal the White House to be the center of a private police state that misuses secret files, intimidates witnesses, destroys reputations, and generally acts like a political mafia. These are serious constitutional offenses, of course. But what is more relevant in our current morally confused climate is that they reveal the one sin that even Jerry Springer condemns: a cavalier willingness to harm and even destroy other people for one's own convenience. They reveal, in fact, that Bill Clinton is not a dashing rogue like Flashman at all, but a sneaking hypocritical villain like Uriah Heep. It is this line of attack that will finish off Clinton, if anything does.

It comes almost as an anticlimax to discover in the Starr Report that Mr. Clinton is *not* especially empathetic, telling Monica Lewinsky at one point that he would never have gotten involved with her if he had known what kind of person she was. What makes this admission doubly disillusioning is that it was all too obvious what Miss Lewinsky was—viz., the sexual equivalent of a double chocolate sundae with extra topping and, more importantly, Big Trouble. Not that this would necessarily have ruled her out as a candidate to be Bill's post-presidential partner. Indeed it might have ruled her in—especially since Bill's real soulmate was no longer available.

Just imagine, however, what might have been: Bill Clinton and Princess Diana, the Second Wedding of the Century, two world-class champions in the Krafft-Ebbing Psychobabble All-Comers. However insightfully he felt her pain, she would ensure that it never went away. However indiscreet his mistresses, her lovers would match them in betrayal, photo for photo. And when it came to binge-eating! Why, they could throw themselves downstairs together after a shameful joint elopement to McDonald's! Bill and Diana—the special relationship to end all special relationships. Yet, if it were not for her death, there would be a horrible inevitability about it.

Of course, getting Prince Charles to take Hillary on board might be a problem. □

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

October 4, 1998

Dear Rusty!

The new policy around the Gore household is that we're not going to talk about it. That's right. You heard me. We are Not Going To Talk About It at all. That's final, you have it from me.

Tipper's got some kind of repetitive-motion injury from flipping the TV clicker back and forth from CNBC to MSNBC to CNN to Fox News, Little Al has developed a gutter mouth, the girls have started to whisper to each other about last year's White House Easter Egg Hunt, and to be totally honest I simply cannot take it one more minute. So we're Not Going To Talk About It. Not Talking About It, NTAI—that's our new motto around here.

Which is good, because there's so much else going on with the family, which our obsession with It—NTAI! NTAI!—has completely drowned out. So I've taken it on myself to act as a sort of family conversation policeman, patrolling the house for noises that sound like It.

This morning, at breakfast, Little Al was eating his cereal and reading the newspaper. So, right from the start, I was on my guard. The newspaper, I've discovered, is pretty much filled with It from front to back. So I was careful with Little Al.

"Hey, Sport," I said, trying to sound casual, "whatcha reading?"

"Newspaper," was his mouth-full-of-cereal reply.

"Oh, Anything in particular?"

"Well," he said, "there's an article in the foreign news section about Fidel Castro. Apparently he's got some form of lip cancer. I guess it was from all those years of smoking cigars."

"Stop it!" I cried. "Not Going To Talk About It! Not Talking About it! NTAI!"

I quickly gathered up the paper and, over Little Al's protests, tossed it into the recycling bin. Sarah came downstairs, ready for school. She was wearing what looked like a new dress. "Finally," I thought, "something to talk about besides It."

"Good morning, dear," I said. "That's a very pretty dress—is it new?"

"Thanks, Dad," she said. "But it isn't new. I just got it back from the dry cleaners. See, I spilled—"

"NTAI! NTAI!" I shouted. "Not Talking About It! Not Talking About It!"

They looked at me like I was crazy. Okay, then, I'm crazy. Let's talk about that.

Later, I was passing by the TV room, and Tipper was in her usual pose: on the edge of the sofa and rocking back and forth, phone in one hand, clicker in the other. She looked paler than usual.

"Tipper," I said sharply, "it is a beautiful autumn day outside. Turn off CNBC or MSNBC or Fox News or whatever it is and let's go for a family outing."

She didn't even look up from the television. "You gotta watch this, Al," she said. "Your political life depends on it."

"Tipper, for the last time, my political life does not turn on some sordid and disgusting sex scandal, okay?"

Finally, she looked up. "What?" she asked. Then it dawned on her. "Oh, that," she said with a dismissive wave of her hand. "That's old news. Monica Lewinsky is on her way to Jessica Hahnsville."

"So what are you watching?"

She gave me one of her you-are-so-dense looks. "I'm flipping between Greenspan's testimony, Rubin's speech about the global economic meltdown, and John Meriwether, the Long-Term Capital Management guy, on Oprah. He's blaming his parents, by the way."

I sat down next to her. "What's going on?"

"We're in trouble, is what's going on," she said.

I rubbed her neck soothingly and spoke in a low, measured tone. That usually relaxes people.

"Tipper, put on your coat and let's go for a walk, get some fresh air, okay?"

"Al, listen to them!" she shouted, flipping the channels wildly. I saw Greenspan flip to Rubin flip to Oprah flip to Neil Cavuto on Fox flip to Joe Kernen on CNBC. I was getting dizzy. But Tipper kept talking. "We're in for a brutal recession. Corporate profits are projected to be down next year. The Dow is skidding to a 3,000-point loss. There are more hedge funds about to implode. Unemployment is rising for the first time in years. And it's all going to hit one year from now. Right in time for the New Hampshire primary."

I watched the TV for a moment. Then I called to Little Al, and together we hoisted Tipper off the couch, carried her fireman-style into the hallway, struggled her into a topcoat, and took her outside for a walk. We haven't talked about Monica Lewinsky since. As for the coming global recession, we're Not Talking About That either, Rusty.

Write soon,

Your pal, Al

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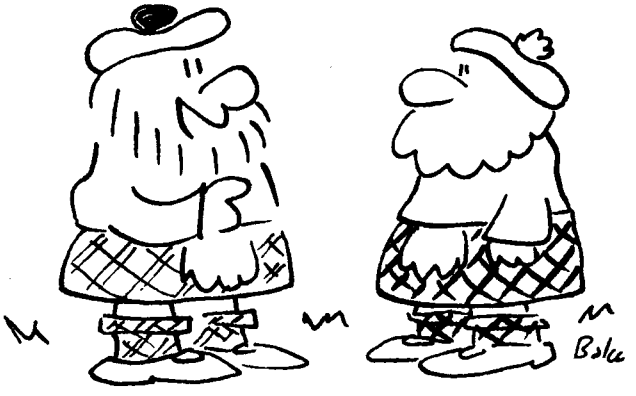

"Okay, MacPherson—you take the high road and I'll go into politics."

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When the Dog Was Wagged

That Sudan plant our missiles
Bombed flatter than the Nile
Made Pepto-Bismol, mainly;
So when a crocodile
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Recall the fix Bill Clinton's in.

—W. H. von Dreele

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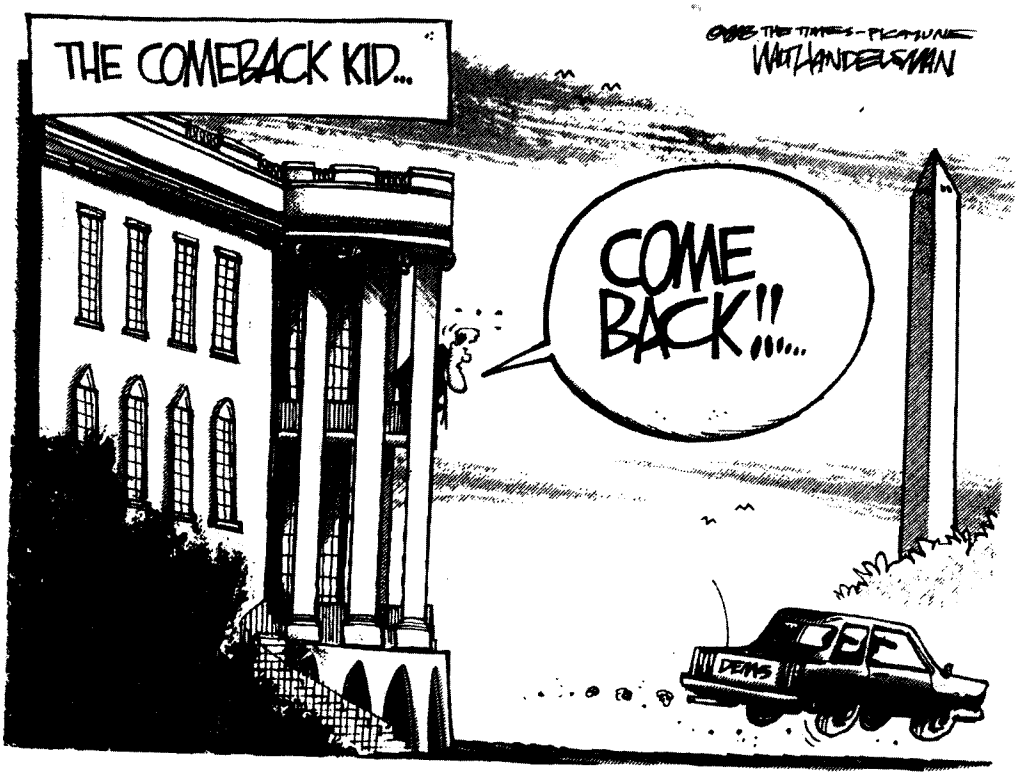

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BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

The Daredevil Lindbergh

JOHN J. MILLER

WHEN Charles Lindbergh landed *The Spirit of St. Louis* in darkness at France's Le Bourget airfield on May 21, 1927, all he wanted to do was sleep. His nonstop journey of 3,614 miles from New York to Paris, which made him the first pilot to fly alone across the Atlantic Ocean, had lasted more than 33 hours. He had stayed awake the night before his departure; when his head finally hit the pillow early in the morning on the 22nd, he would have to make up for 63 hours of sleeplessness. His feat revealed to the world the great potential of aviation, but it was arguably his plane's primitive technology that kept him alive. Struggling against drowsiness almost from the start, Lindbergh saw ghostly images wander in and out of his cabin twenty hours after takeoff; he was hallucinating and probably would have fallen asleep in the sky were it not for his jerky plane's inability to stabilize.

Lindbergh, by A. Scott Berg (Putnam, 628 pp., $30)

There must have been times in his remarkable life when Lindbergh wondered whether it was all worth the effort. Upon his arrival in France, a spontaneously gathered crowd of 150,000 revelers mobbed him with giddy enthusiasm. Lindbergh was a global celebrity from that moment until his death in 1974. For years he and his family were hounded by the press—early versions of today's infamous paparazzi. The notoriety that made him a hero led to the kidnapping and death of his first child. The unwanted publicity drove his family into temporary exile from the United States, and it also led to a troubled marriage.

In his outstanding biography, A. Scott Berg describes how this shy Midwesterner became "the most famous man on earth" by age 25. Unlike so many of the celebrities who would succeed him, Lindbergh won his fame from an actual accomplishment, one which advanced the common good through a single act of stunning bravery. Upon his return to the United States, Lindbergh participated in parades (roughly 1,285 miles of them) all across the country. An estimated thirty million people—one-quarter of the population—turned out to see him in scores of public appearances. A new magazine called *Time* launched its "Man of the Year" feature so that it would have an excuse to put Lindbergh on the cover and attract readers. He was the subject of songs and poems; offers came in from Hollywood. "People behaved as though Lindbergh had walked on water, not flown over it," says Berg.

Roman Genn

Lindbergh was born of Swedish stock in 1902 in Detroit, but he grew up mainly in Little Falls, Minn., and in Washington, D.C., where his father served as a populist congressman for ten years. He never made good grades, but he showed an aptitude for mechanics. Having enrolled in a Nebraska pilots' academy, he was soon earning a living as a professional barnstormer. Planes were a novelty in the early 1920s, and Lindbergh traveled around the Midwest offering flights to curious customers. He also became a stuntman, occasionally going by the name "The Daredevil Lindbergh," performing as a wingwalker and skydiver, and even participating in an aerial wedding (his plane carried the judge, another one the bride and groom). According to Berg, "there was one flight—recorded in Lindbergh's papers with the exact location discreetly omitted—during which a man wanted to fly over his home town and urinate on it . . . a wish Lindbergh granted." He later became one of America's first air- mail carriers.

Fatalities were common during these early days of flight. "Lucky Lindy" had to parachute from faulty planes four times. Despite the risks, aviation technology was steadily advancing to the point where it was becoming possible to contemplate a trip from the United States to Europe. In 1926, Lindbergh began to think seriously about doing it himself. He set about securing the financial backing he would need to custom-build an aircraft; he received most of his help from boosters in St. Louis, a contribution he recognized in christening his plane. A pair of French pilots tried to reach the United States two weeks before Lindbergh's own departure; they disappeared without a trace. Lindbergh would surely have shared their fate were it not for his incredible powers of concentration.

Lindbergh, in fact, was so single-minded about flying that he apparently

Mr. Miller, NR's national political reporter, is the author of The Unmaking of Americans: How Multiculturalism Has Undermined America's Assimilation Ethic.

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Harbor Lights Frances Langford
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Linda Buddy Clark
Deep Purple Larry Clinton, Bea Wain
The Gypsy The Ink Spots
Embraceable You Jimmy Dorsey, Helen O'Connell
Where Or When Guy Lombardo
Love Letters Dick Haymes
I Can't Begin To Tell You Harry James, Betty Grable
As Time Goes By Dooley Wilson (Sam)
To Each His Own Eddy Howard
Miss You Dinah Shore
Auf Wiederseh'n, Sweetheart Vera Lynn
Five Minutes More Tex Beneke
Now Is The Hour Bing Crosby
Something To Remember You By Dinah Shore
Dancing In The Dark Artie Shaw
Peg O'My Heart Harmonicats
La Vie En Rose Edith Piaf
That Old Black Magic Glenn Miller
Sleepy Lagoon Harry James
It Had To Be You Helen Forrest, Dick Haymes
Serenade In Blue Glenn Miller
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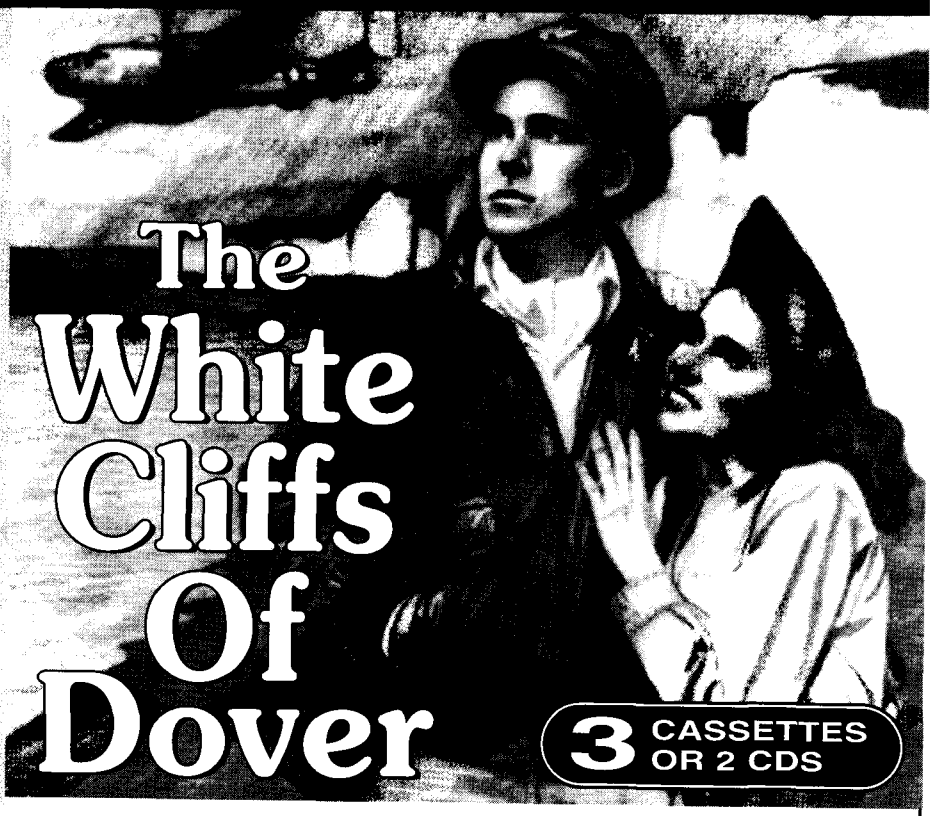
That Old Feeling Shep Fields
By The Light Of The Silvery Moon Ray Noble
I Don't Want To Set The World On Fire The Ink Spots
We'll Meet Again Guy Lombardo
Mam'selle Art Lund
Maria Elena Jimmy Dorsey, Bob Eberly
You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To Dinah Shore
White Cliffs Of Dover Kay Kyser



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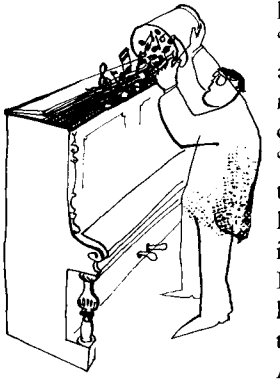
had never even gone on a date before his historic flight. He just hadn't given much thought to girls. On a trip to Mexico City, however, he met Anne Morrow, the daughter of the American ambassador. They soon married. Although they experienced many periods of great happiness together, Charles at times seemed totally detached from his wife. He had difficulty showing his emotions—Anne never saw him cry, even when their baby was kidnapped. Long business trips did not help matters, and Anne found only limited comfort in her own extraordinary commercial success as a writer and poet. Still, the Lindberghs remained together and watched five children reach adulthood.

Berg, who is the first biographer to receive complete access to the Lindbergh papers as well as the full cooperation of the family, deftly fits the copious details of Lindbergh's life into these pages. Many of his readers will have assumed that Lindbergh's accomplishments ended in 1927, or that they were restricted to the field of aviation. Flying over the Yucatan in 1929, Lindbergh took aerial photographs of several Mayan ruins, leading to the discovery of as many as six lost cities. Working at a Princeton lab in 1935, he developed the "Lindbergh pump," which made it possible for the first time for an organ to live outside the body. Lindbergh was instrumental in helping rocketry pioneer Robert H. Goddard secure funding for his important work.

'Lucky Lindy' had to parachute out of faulty planes four times.

Lindbergh also, and less fortunately, became involved in international politics. He encouraged the United States to stay out of the Second World War, taking a prominent position with the anti-interventionist America First Committee. Because of this, Lindbergh was widely suspected of being a Nazi sympathizer—a suspicion that Berg effectively lays to rest. It is clear, however, that Lindbergh was at least mildly anti-Semitic (as were so many Americans in those days) and that he seriously underestimated Hitler's evil. As the United States moved closer to war, Lindbergh's anti-intervention rhetoric heated up and his popularity plummeted. "Few men in American history had ever been so reviled," notes Berg.



Lindbergh did strongly support the war effort following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He served in the Pacific air corps, eventually becoming an expert bombardier. He was truly horrified to learn of the Holocaust, and he even visited the Bergen–Belsen concentration camp in 1945. He continued to defend his pre-war political views, however, and he was too stubborn ever to admit that he had misjudged Hitler.

A modicum of privacy descended on Lindbergh in the 1950s and 1960s, and he turned his energies toward global conservation. He even seemed to have second thoughts about the technologies he had helped develop: "Where civilization is most advanced, few birds exist. I realized that if I had to choose," he wrote in 1964, "I would rather have birds than airplanes." Ten years later, surrounded by his family at their vacation home in Hawaii, he succumbed to lymphoma and was given a traditional Hawaiian burial.

A. Scott Berg never mythologizes Charles Lindbergh, but he understandably admires him. With honesty and style, he performs the important task of reviving this flawed but essential figure, a true American hero. □

Kid Stuff

KATE O'BEIRNE

Saving Childhood: How to Protect Your Child from the National Assault on Innocence, by Michael and Diane Medved (HarperCollins, 324 pp., $24)

ALAS, this book comes along too late in the day for Bernard Lewinsky, whose daughter too early in life "knew more than her prayers," as my mother would have said. Plenty of parents who *don't* reside in Beverly Hills 90210 have also surrendered, meekly acquiescing in whatever garbage Hollywood, the schools, or obnoxious peers choose to dump on their kids. But the rest of us should welcome the Medveds' practical and upbeat blueprint for raising secure, optimistic, and virtuous children.

At the outset, Michael and Diane Medved warn us that parents cannot effectively fight back if they have invited the enemy into the sanctuary of their home. The average family has its television on more than 47 hours a week. And the damage goes well beyond the typically criticized immorality and violence: television also bombards children with messages encouraging impatience, self-pity, insecurity, and pessimism. "Nothing destroys childhood more effectively than television," these parents declare unsurprisingly (he's the author of *Hollywood vs. America*, she's a psychologist), whose own three children are being raised entirely TV-free.

The book's indictment of television should come with a guilt warning to parents who have not yet unplugged their kids. I cringed through the chapters on the media's pernicious influence as I recalled telling 4-year-old John O'Beirne some years ago, "What do you mean there's nothing on TV? We have 96 channels, for gosh sake. Go look again!"

Fortunately, for those who dread the prospect of making television-addicted kids go cold turkey, the Medveds offer a more palatable plan. There should be no television in children's rooms (thank heaven I did something right), news programs should be forbidden, and families should stick to a planned schedule of TV watching.

Of course, it would be better still to chuck the darn thing and limit children to videos and books. But not just *any* videos and books. The Medved children check copyright dates to make sure their library selections were written before 1960. Referring to a favorite video, the parents explain that they have sought to give their daughters, ages 11 and 9, a

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Bunny Rabbit's Picnic view of the world. Their efforts have paid off. The Medved girls can't bear negative news stories or sad endings.

That may be going a little far. Although I too found the VCR invaluable in my quest to raise children fit for the 1950s, my own boys memorized the dialogue in *The Fighting Sullivans*, *Gunga Din*, and *Zulu*. Not the stuff of bunny rabbits' picnics, but worthy classics that fortify a child's appreciation of courage, loyalty, and self-sacrifice.

Although the Medveds recently abandoned Los Angeles for the Pacific Northwest, have no fear that they have adopted Seattle's PC ways. I was relieved to learn that 5-year-old Danny Medved is hooked on hot dogs and armed to the teeth. His arsenal includes toy guns, billy clubs, and handcuffs.

Along with television, the Medveds blame schools and peers for the destructive role they play in undermining parental authority. The only thing the schools seem to be teaching effectively is fear—of environmental ruin, fatal diseases, predatory relatives, corrupt institutions. The authors' judgment about present curriculum fads ("the past was disgraceful, the present is dangerous, and the future is grim") is simple and dire: "Childhood cannot survive relentless fear and premature responsibility."

The Medveds have cultivated in their children the courage to be different.

The Medveds recommend constructive ways to approach well-meaning public-school teachers in order to discourage trendy indoctrination. But anyone who has challenged a second-grade AIDS lesson plan ("He's a nice little boy," I can hear the teacher saying after I leave, "but his mother's some kind of religious nut") may wish to follow the authors' example. The Medved children attend a traditional-minded faith-based school (in their case, Jewish).

In underscoring the central importance of faith in a child's life, the Medveds also stress the less obvious benefits of religious tradition. A serious commitment to religion provides reliable standards of right and wrong, as well as a sense of security based on values shared with ancestors and with co-religionists worldwide.

With all that going for them, the Medved children are well on their way to becoming countercultural adolescents. They won't be slouching through the mall with their pierced and tattered peers, because their dedicated parents have cultivated in them the courage to be different. □

Grand Illusions

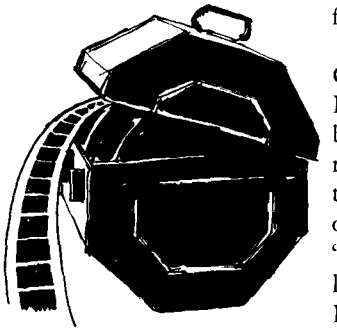
ANDREW J. BACEVICH

OFFERING us the Bush years as George Bush wishes us to remember them, this ponderous and resolutely superficial memoir will do little to restore the luster of that Presidency. Yet *A World Transformed* exposes the strategic illusions that currently blight American foreign policy. In that sense, it qualifies as required reading.

A World Transformed, by George Bush and Brent Scowcroft (Knopf, 568 pp., $30)

Alas, the reading can be an onerous chore. The literary shortcomings of this collaboration between Bush and his national-security advisor, Brent Scowcroft, are considerable. Portions of the book written in the first-person plural provide a joint perspective. Alternating comments by Bush and Scowcroft supplement that account. Circumspect, unfailingly polite, and largely devoid of introspection, the personal commentaries are little more than embroidery. The resulting book is fragmented, redundant, and unnecessarily long.

Yet the authors' worries about length provide a convenient rationale for leaving much out. While Bush's preference for steering clear of domestic matters is understandable (if telling), less justifiable is the decision to ignore or dismiss with barely a mention the invasion of Panama, the Persian Gulf before and after Desert Storm, and the crises in Bosnia and Somalia.



In essence, the authors confine themselves to two episodes which they hope will constitute the Bush legacy: bringing down the curtain on the Cold War and forcibly ejecting the Iraqi army from Kuwait. Yet even as recounted here, Bush's role in the liberation of Central and Eastern Europe and the unification of Germany was witness rather than architect. Meanwhile, efforts to portray the Gulf War as "a watershed of history" appear more fanciful than ever. Eight years after Desert Storm, the war's final outcome seems increasingly in doubt.

To be sure, Bush deserves the nation's gratitude for refusing to acquiesce in Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. The combination of that achievement and Bush's inability to translate military victory into a lasting strategic victory reflect his strengths and limitations as diplomatist, Commander-in-Chief, and statesman.

For Bush, the essence of diplomacy is personal interaction. *A World Transformed* brims with accounts of the President's conversations with his friends—and we are assured repeatedly that they *are* all his friends: Hosni, Helmut, Brian, Margaret, Vaclav, François, and above all, Mikhail. In his profoundly elitist view of how the world works, what really counts is the deal cut at the G7, the relaxed chat at Kennebunkport, or the friendly late-night call placed from the Oval Office.

Yet above all it is as Commander-in-Chief that Bush yearns to be remembered. Even as he recounts his agony over the prospect of sending out American soldiers—"kids," in the President's lexicon—in defense of Kuwait, he was confident that American air power would pulverize the Iraqis. With General Colin Powell on the very eve of the ground offensive lobbying to call it off, Bush stood firm.

In doing so, he responded to the mandate of history. Indeed, a handful of historical truisms defined Bush's princi-

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ples of statecraft: No Munich, No Vietnam, No Versailles. Munich showed that appeasement only fuels aggression. Vietnam warned against the danger of protracted conflict. Versailles alerted Bush to the hazards of humiliating a great power that's down on its luck.

As guidelines for managing the Cold War, the Three Noes had served the United States well. But it became Bush's fate to assume office as that era was slipping away. As this account documents, neither Bush nor Scowcroft was up to the task of formulating a grand strategy to respond to the end of the Cold War and victory in the Gulf. What new configuration of power among nations might produce and sustain equilibrium? In 1990 and 1991, that crucial question went unanswered.

Other concerns preoccupied the President. Writing in his diary as the Berlin Wall was being breached, Bush reflected: "The big question I ask myself is, How do we capitalize on these changes?" His answer: arms control, on which he would "demand new studies." For his part, Scowcroft flirted with the idea that success in the Gulf might revive the vanished hopes of 1945. The United States and the Soviet Union could henceforth "stand together." In place of FDR's Four Policemen, Scowcroft offered two—even as one of them teetered on the verge of extinction.

Eight years after Desert Storm, the war's final outcome seems increasingly in doubt.

Unable to conceive of a realistic new strategy, Bush beguiled himself with rhetoric about a "new world order." Sadly, that rhetoric may well constitute his true legacy. His strategically illiterate successor has seized upon it and now prattles on about the obligations of an "indispensable nation" summoned to "remake history." In the process, Bill Clinton has fostered new illusions and undertaken new commitments for which he has already shown an unwillingness to pay. When the bill for those illusions comes due, George Bush will number among those whom history calls to account. □

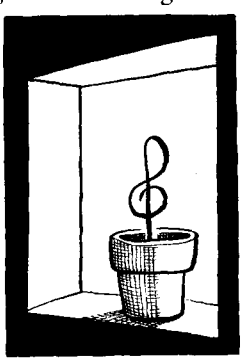
Shadow Boxing

JAMES BOWMAN

Sir Vidia's Shadow: A Friendship across Five Continents, by Paul Theroux (Houghton Mifflin, 288 pp., $24)

IF only Paul Theroux had consulted Dr. Laura Schlessinger. When she gets a call from someone who wants to know what to do about a new stepmother, recently married to a widowed or divorced father and now interfering with or even destroying the old intimacy of parent and child, her advice to the child in question is: "Honeybabe, don't pick a fight with the woman he's sleeping with." Mr. Theroux is a clever man and often a good writer, but he could use a little of Dr. Laura's common sense. When his surrogate father, his literary father, Sir Vidia Naipaul, remarried two months after the death of his wife, Pat, in 1996, it should have been obvious that the thirty-year-old friendship between the two men was bound to change. Their half-lifelong intimacy had not included Nadira, the new Lady Naipaul (as she prefers to be called). Also, Theroux had been close to Pat and had even been asked by Vidia to write her obituary, which made another reason for the new broom to sweep him away.

Not long after the marriage, Theroux found inscribed copies of his own books which had been presented to Vidia and Pat Naipaul advertised for sale in a rare-books catalogue. He faxed without comment a copy of the catalogue page to Naipaul and received in return a note from Nadira accusing *him* of slights to and betrayals of the friendship. A further faxed appeal to Naipaul over his wife's head went unanswered. Finally, a year later, the two men met by chance in a London street. Naipaul had nothing to say to him but "Take it on the chin and move on." But Theroux couldn't "move on." Instead of listening to his son, who told him, "Dad, you're obsessing," he decided to strike back by writing this book.



It was a bad decision, at least from a literary point of view. The soap-opera element to the story ensured that *Sir Vidia's Shadow* would be prominently reviewed and talked about; all this will probably translate into larger-than-usual sales. But it also means that the book cannot fight free of the banality of its origins. The final chapters are an embarrassment—full of self-pity, scatological barbs directed at the loathsome, "nightmarish" image of Lady Naipaul, and childish petulance toward Sir Vidia himself. "I had admired his talent," writes Theroux. "After a while I admired nothing else. Finally I began to wonder about his talent, seriously to wonder, and doubted it when I found myself skipping pages in his more recent books. In the past I would have said the fault was mine. Now I knew that he could be the monomaniac in print that he was in person."

Even if Naipaul were wrong about all the many things that Theroux suddenly discovered he was wrong about ("He was mistaken about so much"), Theroux was not the man to say so. The literary and intellectual judgment was tainted (a favorite Naipaul word) by his personal hurt and anger, as even the slightest degree of detachment from these feelings would have revealed to him. It is the more a pity because in its earlier chapters, before the bitterness predominates, the book offers a fascinating portrait of the plain V. S. Naipaul, whom Theroux knew as a fellow exile in post-independence, pre–Idi Amin Uganda in the mid 1960s, and thereafter mainly in England.

I am not one of those who think Theroux is guilty of "betrayal" for revealing, say, that his former friend once invited him, an impecunious freelancer, to lunch at the posh Connaught Hotel in London, ordered an expensive wine, and then stuck him with the bill—which came to something not far short of all the disposable money he had. Or that Sir Vidia accepted his knighthood after

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having ridiculed the very idea of such an honor for years. The portrait would not be worth having unless it came with warts and all, and Theroux is enough of a disciplined writer to show us a more attractive side of the wise, waspish, finicky little man whom he loved for so long.

In fact, had Vidia rather than Pat died in 1996, Theroux might have been the discount-store Boswell to his discount-store Johnson. He seems to have remembered their conversations in almost Boswellian detail and offers us many obiter dicta of an almost Johnsonian intelligence, if not wit. Naipaul as he is revealed in these pages is rarely brilliant and even more rarely funny, but he has a remarkable insight into people and politics and literature, and he is always honest and often profound. Above all, he stands fearlessly apart from intellectual fashion and political correctness. A lot of the embarrassment which is supposed to have accrued to him as a result of this memoir is owing to its reports of his occasional mild racial slurs or remarks like this one to Theroux's then wife, which Theroux now pretends to be horrified by: "I am speaking about this bogus feminism, the way it makes women trivial-minded . . . Women long for witnesses, that is all. Witnesses to their pleasure or their distress."

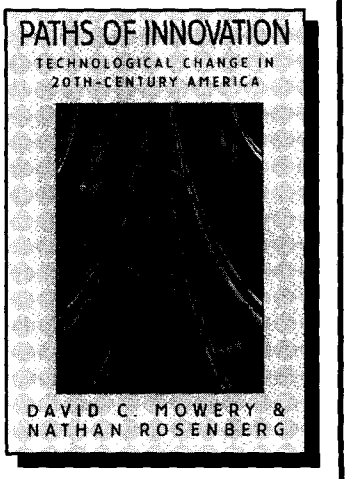
V. S. Naipaul, as he is revealed in these pages, is rarely brilliant and even more rarely funny, but he has remarkable insight into people and politics and literature.

Theroux's later accusations against his friend of misogyny have rather too much the sound of a goody two-shoes summoning the "gender" police in order to settle a private score. After the final snub he writes that he felt "liberated at last . . . He had freed me, he had opened my eyes, he had given me a subject." In reality, Theroux is not "liberated" but cast into the intellectual prison of his own bitterness and hurt feelings, and an otherwise promising "subject" is spoiled as a result. □

Paths of Innovation

Technological Change in 20th-Century America

David C. Mowery* and *Nathan Rosenberg



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FILM

From the Mouths of Daughters

JOHN SIMON

I MISSED the first few minutes of *A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries*, during which the enchanting Virginie Ledoyen writes a letter to her unborn son whom she'll offer for adoption. She is 15, and not ready for motherhood. Of course, by the time he is adopted by the American Willises at age 5 or 6, she should have been able to cope. If there is an explanation for this, I'll never know: a Merchant–Ivory film tends to be hard enough to view once.

This one is based on an autobiographical novel by Kaylie Jones, daughter of the novelist James Jones, about her life from little girl to high-school senior, first in Paris and later in America—here New England, though in actuality Long Island. How factual it all is (screenplay by the director, James Ivory, and Ruth Prawer Jhabvala) I cannot say, but I am ready to believe that the parents, Bill and Marcella Willis, would be the sort not to learn French in all those Paris years.

The film is divided into three sections, each bearing the name of a masculine character. "Billy" is the name Benoît chooses for himself after his adoption by the Willises, and here we have his early childhood with Channe, as Kaylie is called in the story. The kids get into amusing situations both at their bilingual school and at home, both in Paris and on vacation in the country, while the adults around them indulge their expatriate existences. Child actors fluent in both French and English had to be found, and Samuel Gruen and Luisa Conlon (daughter of the conductor James Conlon) fill the bill endearingly. The best episodes concern Channe's near-rape by a neighbor kid in his country tree house, with snails as aphrodisiacs; and Mrs. Willis's battle with a French schoolmistress she deems too strict.

The next section, "Francis," is less winning. Francis Fortescue is an American boy who becomes the teenaged Channe's best friend. He has an eccentric mother, played by Jane Birken (how sadly aged!), and himself exhibits all the signs of budding homosexuality in his weird clothes, passion for opera, ability to sing arias for his schoolmates in class, etc. Yet the film makes nothing of this,

Bilingualism seems to have been the main basis for casting in A Soldier's Daughter Never Cries.

and the section climaxes with Francis's declaration of love to Channe, who is on the verge of returning stateside with her family.

As Anthony Roth Costanzo plays Francis, he is even more obnoxious than precocious, and because Channe, enacted by the then 14-year-old Leelee Sobieski, towers over him, he also emerges unduly ludicrous. But again, bilingualism seems to have been the main basis for casting, since neither Anthony Roth Costanzo nor Leelee Sobieski, who looks like a pubescent Helen Hunt, abounds in charm. Surrounding them are scenes concerning the Willises, Mrs. Fortescue, and peripheral adults leading their purplish lives, though none of this manages to have much impact, not even Bill Willis's problems with his writing.

We also get a romance between Candida, the Willis's faithful Portuguese maid, and Mamadou, a jolly African who impulsively woos her. The episodes concerning these characters are even more, so to speak, episodic than the rest, but the entire film is singularly fragmented, with very little sense of a continuum. Typically inept is an avant-garde performance of *Salome* at the Paris Opéra in which all the principals shoot up into a drugged daze, and the heroine is executed by lethal injection—experimental nonsense that seems here out of both period and place. And Francis, who already knows all about opera, sees nothing bizarre about this production.

In the final section, "Keith," we are in New England, where Channe and Billy attend a prototypical high school. Channe loses her virginity, and Bill his life to heart disease. All-too-familiar vignettes follow in rapid succession, but neither *scène à faire*, the deflowering or the death, is actually shown. The highest dramatic pitch is attained when Channe runs off to a New Year's party with her boyfriend just as Bill is stricken, and when Billy refuses to read his birth mother's diary, which Marcella, as she promised, hands over to him. There are awkwardly-squeezed-in flashbacks to the birth mother's affair, which at least afford a few precious glimpses of Virginie Ledoyen. Finally, though deprived of its head, the Willis family unites closely in a waterside scene that drips with sentiment.

Among the adult actors, Dominique Blanc as Candida is most noteworthy. Barbara Hershey tries hard to be an idiosyncratic Marcella; as Bill, Kris Kristofferson again distinguishes himself chiefly by his slitty eyes, deeply recessed under beetling brow and brows, but not especially worth our spelunking.

■ Based on what looks like another autobiographical novel, this one by Anna Quindlen, ***One True Thing*** is a standard weepie or women's picture, in which Meryl Streep gets to play first the ideal, then the gallantly moribund, wife and mother Kate Gulden. Married to George, a self-centered college professor and novelist, she has a feckless son, Brian, and an ambitious daughter, Ellen, who is beginning to make it as a journalist in New York.

When Kate, who will throw you a delightful costume party at which she dresses up as Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz*, and who is active in a faculty-wife group called the Minnies (or is it Minis?), busy beautifying the picturesque college town, comes down with cancer, George, too selfish to care for her properly, commandeers Ellen back home to do so. Brian, you see, is still away at another college, where he flunks English Lit., which he dare not tell his father.

Ellen, who dislikes her mother but idealizes her father, grudgingly agrees, and extorts a concession from her acidulous editor to work on her pieces from home, notably the profile of a controversial senator. This provides one subplot; another stems from Ellen's discovery that her beloved father has been conducting numerous affairs with wom-

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en students, and the eventual further discovery that her amazing mother knew this and forgave.

The film chronicles Ellen's awakening respect and love for Kate, and her realization that career matters less than family. (Never fear, though; in the end she will have both.) All very worthy, but requiring sharper scrutiny and more attention to minor characters such as brother Brian and a fickle boyfriend, Jordan. And the device of telling the story in flashbacks from an interview with a DA investigating the circumstances of Kate's death feels tacked on, if not downright tacky, and leads up to an O. Henry–style revelation more cute than stirring.

An occasional astringent episode does work, notably a dinner visit from a famous novelist and idolized former teacher of George's, which proves a humiliating experience. Or a scene where Kate can no longer get out of her bathtub and must, scraggly-haired and horribly emaciated, be carried to bed. (Never fear, though; it's a body double. Miss Streep, who'll do anything for her art, stopped short of starvation.)

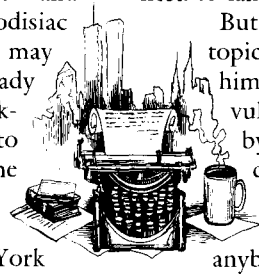
Miss Streep, indeed, does her utmost to make Kate credible, which proves nearly but not quite feasible; Renée Zellweger would be a compelling Ellen, except for a babyish voice. William Hurt as George has a certain guilty, worried look that he overdoes here, and his performance in general has too much déjà vu about it. There is a decently understated score by Cliff Eidelman, and Declan Quinn's camera proves apt enough. Karen Croner's screenplay is probably just what Anna Quindlen's novel deserves, but the choice of Carl Franklin, an action director, may actually have sanitized some of the movie's stickier moments. □

CITY DESK

Age of Shame

RICHARD BROOKHISER

MY city is no stranger to the politics of shamelessness. Historian James Thomas Flexner was a reporter in the days of Jimmy Walker. When the dapper mayor showed up late for an interview, a glum young Flexner complained, "I'm going to miss a date with the prettiest girl in Greenwich Village," whereupon the mayor said, "Take my car," and Flexner rode uptown with a police escort and a siren. "It had a great aphrodisiac effect," he remembers. We may infer that he and the young lady were not married. Mayor Walker was certainly not married to the love of his life, although he was married to someone else.



That is the romance of flâneurs, but how does New York respond to love among the razorbacks? My soundings suggest that even here the President's poll numbers conceal pockets of weakness.

Upper East Side dinner party, art bourgeoisie. The gathering was bourgeois in that everyone owned means of production: one of us in the most nuts-and-bolts sense (he publishes a weekly paper); the rest, in the sense that we own our talents. They are small talents, but there are those of us who love them. Politically, the publisher was a businessman moderate; everyone else (except me) belonged to the Creative Left. The feminist author, for example, proposed solving the Asian economic crises with a worldwide regime of wage–price controls, enforced by the UN; the publisher tried to talk her out of it.

But when the President was the topic, all were unanimous: Give him the hook. Much of the revulsion was aesthetic, tinctured by class prejudice. The film critic said, "Clinton marries up, and f— down." The publisher asked whether anybody would want his own daughter working at the White House (the man's wife reminded him of their daughter's unsatisfactory boyfriend, which blunted this line of inquiry). The feminist author had written an op-ed piece denouncing Clinton. The publisher returned to the fray to point out that the scandal had generated an industry of commentary, not to mention the Starr

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Report's hitting Barnes & Noble, which should more than compensate for the $40 million spent by Kenneth Starr.

Gay personal trainer, former Buchananite, possessing strong common-sensical streaks. He is, if possible, more enraged with the President than I am. Every session, we exchange damning tidbits like tricoteuses at the foot of the guillotine. He is not at all impressed by the strength of the economy. "We didn't hire a manager, we elected a leader." He blames Clinton for providing the country, even pre-scandal, with a rhetoric of infidelity, and claims to have heard "Don't ask, don't tell" quoted as a justification for promiscuity. He lives in Chelsea, ground zero of the sexual revolution, gay division—a tough place to look for constancy. But he thinks the President has made it tougher. "If he lies about sex, why can't everyone?"

Franco-Israeli restaurateur. No Clinton slippage here; he will support the White House till the last former intern dies. He displays the arguments of the European sophisticate in all their putrescent glory, like an old corsage of cattleyas: "Mitterrand had a mistress," *a.d.s.*, *a.d.s.* But—and here is where the cynics catch themselves—he is an equal-opportunity retailer of jokes, and every other joke these days undercuts Clinton. It was from him that I heard the one about Buddy's replacement. (Readers who send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to me at *NR* will *not* receive a copy.)

I felt like a Zen master who had slapped a student.

Thirtyish waitress. A space cadet—she calls me and my wife a "karmic couple" (good karma, I hope)—but very sweet. She did not want to read, think, or talk about the Starr Report, but she believes vehemently that Starr is a smut merchant. I said: Suppose you brought a lawsuit about something—a car crash, an operation gone wrong, a derelict landlord. You wouldn't like it if some witness lied. And you wouldn't like it any more if that witness was a cop, or a judge, or a city councilman, who used his office to back up his lie, and then to hide the fact that he'd told it. She stopped: No, I wouldn't. I felt like a Zen master who had slapped a student.

The Clinton story has two main threads, and New Yorkers, living in the cat's cradle of media and gossip, strum both. The big hummer, of course, is sex. We feel tolerance; priggishness; curiosity; disdain for Arkansas mores; suspicion that south of everyone's belt is the Deep South. We also feel (and perhaps only in the last bastion of psychoanalysis could this be acknowledged) the dismay of a perverse Primal Scene. The President is a father figure; but we have caught him, not with Mommy, but with Sis.

There is also the thread of lying or, more accurately, of being lied to. Your lying is a misdemeanor; my being lied to is a crime against humanity. But do not misunderstand: Clinton would still cream Bob Dole in a rematch here. It would, however, be a glum and cheerless victory. □

LEISURE

Shall We Dance?

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

UNTIL recently, in my mind ballroom dancing came under the scope of that useful British adjective *naff*: faded, dated, and slightly cheesy, lacking any proper postmodern self-consciousness, any *irony*. The overgroomed men; the women loaded down with tulle and costume jewelry; those rigid cabin-attendant smiles.

What got, and held, my attention was the unexpected difficulty of it. My wife and I took a three-week crash course in ballroom to prepare for the Petroushka Ball, an annual charity affair given by the New York Russian community. But our three weeks left us with only minimal skills. Much more often than not we didn't even know which step we should be doing. The only thing I felt sure of was that a waltz goes BOOM-cha-cha; but a dismaying number of other tunes seemed to go BOOM-cha-cha and yet proved impossible to waltz to.

And there were some real dancers in the Plaza Hotel that night. They were older types, mostly—children of Russian aristocrats who had fled the Bolsheviks. Nobody of our own generation seemed to know how to dance; but these elderly Tsarists were flying round the floor in a way that was undeniably impressive. You couldn't help thinking, *Hey, I wish I could do that.*

We went back to our local dance studio and signed up for a full course of instruction. We were back in the hands of Charlie Wood, who had coached us for the ball. Under Charlie's unblinking eye we proceeded to tackle ballroom in earnest: the gravity of the waltz, the cheery insouciance of the foxtrot, the campy flamboyance of the tango, the odd erotic sparkle of the merengue. Each dance has its own personality, its own particular appeal to the spirit.

And none of them is merely a matter of steps. Ballroom is a whole-body activity. In competitive dancing, when several couples are on a small floor—as at our first competition last weekend—the judges may not even be able to see your feet. They grade on concepts like "form," "frame," and "connection." Charlie hammers away relentlessly at these abstractions, striving to make the intangible real. For "connection" he has us facing each other across a broomstick, holding it with our hands, trying to keep it still as we move. At times the skills he is imparting seem to have a metaphysical quality, as if part of some Oriental religious discipline. "Arms firm, head up, shoulders back, knees slightly bent. Good: now get ready to *move your center of gravity*. Five, six, seven, AND . . ."

Ballroom dancing is, in fact, quite cerebral. Probably the best attribute a dancer can have—other than an appetite for endless repetitive practice—is a keen intuitive grasp of Newtonian mechanics: how objects move in space under the action of forces. Our Charlie is something of a specialist here, and is not shy of using terms like "vector" and "angular momentum" when describing a movement. After six months of this, I was not very surprised to find that a chance acquaintance in the competitors'

Mr. Derbyshire is the author of the novel Seeing Calvin Coolidge in a Dream.

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changing room last weekend was a professor of theoretical physics at Stony Brook University. He danced a mean samba.

The presence of that professor points up another aspect of ballroom that confounded my prejudices: its social inclusiveness. George Smith, the franchisee of our local studio—it is licensed by the Arthur Murray organization—had a distinguished career in the corporate world before returning to ballroom dancing, his first love (he comes from a family of ballroom champions, and was a teenage champion himself). George told me that this last year has been the studio's best ever. Our beginners' class is so crowded there is hardly room to do a box step. The most obvious explanation is the one offered by George himself: interest aroused by the inclusion of ballroom dancing in the 2000 Olympics (perhaps with a boost from Masayuki Suo's beautiful movie *Shall We Dance?*). But there is something else going on as well.

The only thing I felt sure of was that a waltz goes BOOM-cha-cha.

To me, as to most who came of age in the Sixties and Seventies, "dancing" meant aimless solitary jiggling—the physiodynamic equivalent of free verse. Such incoherence cannot satisfy the human spirit for long. There is, one senses, a growing hunger for form and formality, for difficulty, for discipline, for *structure*. Meanwhile a generation that grew up watching videos or hunched over computer screens now feels a pull toward the leisured company of their fellow men. Such company must always be centered on some common activity—dining, drinking, gambling. Of all the available possibilities, dancing is the most healthful, the most fun to watch, and the most conducive to cheerful socializing and the mingling of the sexes. It is no accident that half the key scenes in the great nineteenth-century social novels, from Jane Austen to Tolstoy, are set in ballrooms. Whether ballroom dancing is really coming back for good, I do not know; but if it does not, a great many people will have missed out on a great deal of harmless fun, and civilization will have lost another small battle to barbarism. □

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THEATER

Saints and Sinners

LINDA BRIDGES

A FEW weeks ago *NR* mused editorially on the spate of plays and films about Oscar Wilde. The editorial compared Wilde and his whole *fin-de-siècle* generation unfavorably to the great Victorians who had preceded them and the great modernists who would follow them, on the grounds of moral seriousness, citing "Wilde's one masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Earnest*," as Exhibit No. 1.

But is *Earnest* "Wilde's one masterpiece"? It is certainly a delicious and perfectly crafted play. And, no, it does not abound in moral seriousness. But the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, has been reopening Wilde's oeuvre in recent years. *An Ideal Husband* (reviewed in these pages August 28, 1995) and this season's *Lady Windermere's Fan* both prove to put the famous Wilde wit to the service of a deep exploration of the human heart.

Wilde's depth has been obscured for recent generations by the way he uses the conventions of melodrama in these plays. He uses them in *Earnest*, too: but there it is for comic effect, in a way that feels much like the irony of our own *fin de siècle*. In *Lady Windermere*, as in *Ideal Husband*, the wrongs and perceived wrongs, and the resulting griefs, are serious. The theme is appearance and reality, as the characters struggle with the false idealism of the lesser Victorians, in which to be worthy of love and respect the woman must never have had an impure thought, the man an ignoble one. In the final scene, Lord Windermere says, "Child, you and she belong to different worlds. Into your world evil has never entered." And his wife replies:

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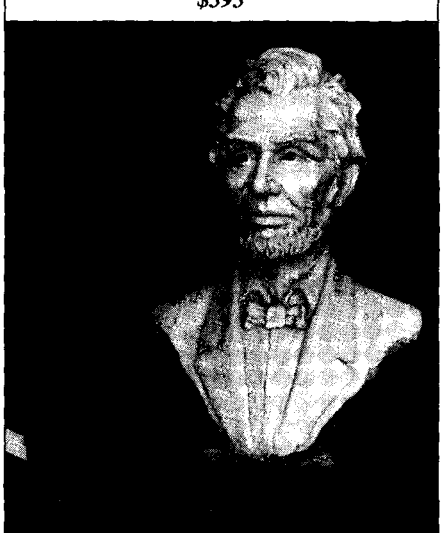

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(signed) Jason Ng, Circulation Manager, Sept. 23, 1998

> Don't say that, Arthur. There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded oneself that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice. . . . Let us go to Selby. In the rose garden at Selby the roses are white *and* red.

If those are startling words coming from the pen of the great aesthete, recall that Wilde once said, long before his deathbed conversion, "Catholicism is for saints and sinners. For *respectable* people the Anglican church will do."

We owe the recovery of this side of Wilde to the Shaw's artistic director, Christopher Newton, and his fine team of actors. In *Lady Windermere* Colombe Demers and Ben Carlson are perfect as the elegant young couple who come so close to the precipice. Fiona Reid as Mrs. Erlynne starts out too edgy—too much like her own Amanda in *Private Lives*—but deepens wonderfully. Among the galaxy of smaller parts, I would single out Barry MacGregor's endearingly feckless Lord Augustus Lorton.

At southern Ontario's other great repertory company, the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford, appearance and reality are likewise the theme in *Much Ado about Nothing*, where trust turns out to be a worthier guide than ocular proof. Brian Bedford returns to the role of Benedick, which he has played many times in his twenty-year association with the company, this time opposite thirty-year veteran Martha Henry. "Are you *sure*?" asked a fellow theatergoer when told of the casting. For while it is clear from the text that Beatrice and Benedick are significantly older than Hero and Claudio, they are not usually enough older to be their parents. But such are the qualities Mr. Bedford and Miss Henry bring to the roles that the casting works. Indeed the wariness of this pair, the reluctance of each to believe that the other loves, is the more believable, and the more poignant.

Richard Monette, Stratford's artistic director, still has too much of a tendency to look for *new* way of doing the warhorses, such as *Much Ado* and *The Miser* (both of which will be coming to New York City later this fall, giving American audiences a rare opportunity to see the dean of Canadian actors, William Hutt, without going through Customs). In these productions, Mr. Monette has added stylized touches borrowed from the Commedia dell'Arte, and he allows the physical comedy to get out of hand. However, there was an unexpected benefit, for those of us caught up in Anglican liturgical disputes, in his setting *Much Ado* in the twentieth century: the words (in a song borrowed from *Cymbeline)* "Thou thy worldly task hast done, / Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages" fit the music of a 1930s torch song with no sense of anachronism. Perhaps the fact that our greatest body of plays was written in the same linguistic period as the first Book of Common Prayer and the Authorized Version of the Bible, whose phrases permeate our literature, has given these works a mutually reinforcing effect in keeping the Tudor/Stuart idiom available to us.

'In the rose garden at Selby the roses are white and *red.'*

The early part of that period is the setting for one of Stratford's other offerings, *A Man for All Seasons*, starring Douglas Rain as the eponymous St. Thomas More. The left-wing bias of the playwright, Robert Bolt, shows, not only in the narratorial Common Man (pungently acted by Brad Rudy), but also, I think, in the play's focusing on More's relation to the law and to his own self more than on his relation to God. And Rain's More is diffident in manner, reminiscent less of Paul Scofield's portrayal in the film thirty years ago (or William Hutt's here a dozen years ago) than of Waugh's Mr. Scott-King. But it is a portrayal that grows into life; the final meeting between Sir Thomas and his wife, Lady Alice (Diane D'Aquila), and Sir Thomas's statement before his execution are moving in proportion to their lack of sentimentality.

There is much else in the cornucopias set forth at both houses. But can one speak of the Shaw without mentioning the old fox himself? This year's main Shavian offering is *Major Barbara*, one of the plays that justify the classic Hirschfeld cartoon of GBS as puppeteer. Shaw found his characters' humanity less interesting than ideas. So here it's no fault of Jim Mezon, Sharry Flett, Kelli Fox, and the rest that an air of unreality pervades the last act. You would not catch one of *these* characters talking about red roses and white. □

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More Facts?

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 29

The Democrats have done what they could in the present mess, and the focus of their opposition has been the selectivity of the material being made public. The first complaint was over the failure of Kenneth Starr to give the Democrats a chance to read the report before it was given to the Hyde Committee. Then they complained about the airing of the Clinton testimony before the grand jury. The next step is to walk over to the barn that holds the cartons of raw material and draw from it relevant information. More immediately, we have the Tripp recorded phone calls, bowdlerized, to survey. Came then the "concessions" on Monday by Henry Hyde. A bipartisan team of investigators will be given access to the raw material to search out—to search out what? The second concession, as it has been labeled, is an agreement to convene a subcommittee to hear expert testimony, with the mandate of saying what exactly, in their judgment, it takes to generate an impeachable offense. And, finally, the senior Democratic Judiciary Committee member, John Conyers, will be permitted to subpoena any witness he thinks the committee should hear from.

Now what confounds about all this is the implied proposition that something relevant hasn't been brought up. If the material being sought is negative to the President, one wonders how it could be that the Starr investigators didn't come up with it? None of the data scheduled to be examined got there in the first place except by passing through the hands of Starr. What on earth did he miss? It is understandable to maintain formally that there may be material in that warehouse mitigating Clinton's offenses. But if so, why haven't the President's lawyers brought it to light? An answer to that might be that there is something there that Clinton forgot, and therefore forgot to remind his lawyers of its existence. Like what?

Surely it would have been easiest for Mr. Hyde from the beginning to urge a ruling that would have given Democratic representatives of the committee, or for that matter of the President, total access to the material. The mandate would have been: Help yourself, and come up with anything you want to come up with that helps your case.

The confusing direction of the current investigation lies in its endorsement of the idea that there is ambiguity sitting around of a critical nature. The same day Mr. Hyde's concessions were publicized, a committee of scholars announced that they were closing their six-year investigation of —the murder of John F. Kennedy. Their conclusion is that Lee Harvey Oswald probably did it and did it alone. That finding is as old as the Warren Commission's finding, filed in September 1964.

It is understandable that desperate Democrats urge the public to believe that there is something hidden in the unexamined documents that casts a different light on Monica Lewinsky. But the country should proceed on the basis that what it is required for the House to consider is part of the public record undisputed by serious people. The defendant Clinton clings to the ephemeron that he didn't really tell a lie, because if you violated the girl yesterday and you are asked today are you violating the girl, the questioner is asking a question in the present tense and it was absolutely true that the day he was asked, he didn't go from the witness box directly to the couch. On the matter of, Did he seek to obstruct justice? let the Democrats come up with a glaring omission by Starr, and if they do, the Judiciary Committee should come up with a way to impeach Starr, not Clinton. Meanwhile, Mr. Clinton seems to be entirely at ease. He has just had a wonderful spell in Hollywood where his rooters are considering ways to nominate him for an Academy Award. James Carville, pit bull, has been relicensed for one more prolonged act. However, the activation of Carville brought a little sobriety even to such loyalists as Barney Frank, who commented, "I think Carville overdoes it. It would be wrong for any Democrat to forget that the President's mistakes are part of the problem."

Yes. Mr. Nixon's mistakes were part of the problem. As also the mistakes of Lee Harvey Oswald. We have ahead of us not so much an inquiry into the facts of the matter—this has been done. The inquiry is into the question: What does a Congress do when a President behaves as this one has behaved? That is a question for reflection; and to it, utter sobriety should be summoned. But it is a waste of time and a diversion of attention to proceed as if the relevant facts are hidden in some furtive folder in the archives. □

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For the GOP, Tomorrow?

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 25

The hue and cry is to get on with the other business of the nation. Motives for doing this obviously trace to partisan impulses, though of course both Republicans and Democrats acknowledge that at some point the country will need to get back to other concerns. The Democrats (on the whole) wish to bring us as soon as possible to vaporizing Monica Lewinsky. This will never quite happen (Lewinsky Lives! will be on teenagers' T-shirts fifty years from now), but even if we resolve, until impeachment or censure or whatever, to give only 50 per cent of our attention to sex, perjury, and the obstruction of justice, that leaves 50 per cent to—do what?

That is a problem the Republicans most pronouncedly face. The Democrats have the excuse that they are leaderless, that although it is still possible for their leader to order an air strike in foreign parts of the world, he doesn't wield a presidential axe to hack away at domestic objectives. The initiative, then, is with Mr. Gingrich and the top Republican cadre.

There has been the idea, more or less bandied about, to grant an $80-billion tax cut over the next five years. As expected, the moment word of this got out, the political reply from the Democrats was spastic: "The only thing that draws GOP attention away from Monica Lewinsky's crotch is more money for the rich." We are familiar with the line.

The Speaker can plead that tax relief, when it includes relief at all levels, has necessarily to aid proportionately the rich. That being so, the class-warfare tocsin is sounded and Democrats make the most of it. The councils within the GOP

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are certainly guided by the politically sovereign consideration of the day, namely, What is it that improves GOP chances at the polls in November?

The analysis is tight, because hanging in the balance is the Republican majority of the new Senate and the new House. If 5 additional Republican senators are elected, then power is accumulated to break Democratic filibusters. To do this requires a vote of 60 senators. What then happens is a presidential veto, unless the GOP were to come in on election day with 67 senators, which is inconceivable. But to overcome a filibuster exposes dissenters to an actual vote. And many Democrats do not welcome this, for instance in opposing school vouchers, partial-birth-abortion reform, and tax reduction.

The case is made (implicitly, by GOP inactivity) for waiting until November. What isn't happening is the public case for income-tax reduction. It is a reflection of the paucity of thought given to the subject that merely to raise it translates in much of the public mind into a call for extra toys for Bill Gates.

This is curious given that three prominent candidates for the GOP nomination in 2000 are deeply committed to radical tax reform. Steve Forbes, John Ashcroft, and Lamar Alexander wish something between a flat tax and a 28 per cent maximum tax, which is to say they occupy territory ranging from Milton Friedman to Ronald Reagan.

The Republican Party's traditional position should also be its most endearing. It is that the focus should always be on how much money the government takes from you, not how much money the government "gives" you. The rhetorical appeal of the second formulation absolutely governs the thought not only of most Democrats, but also of many Republicans. In their criticism of tax relief the critics will always be talking about a giveaway to the rich, which is different from returning to one's neighbor what was his.

Some years ago an effort was made, spearheaded by then senator Charles Percy, to introduce sunset legislation for regulatory federal agencies. Under the plan, ten years after an agency was founded its raison d'être would be re-explored. In the absence of a vote reinstituting the agency, it would cease to exist. The idea of reversing the presumption—from perpetuating incumbent regulations to allowing them to lapse unless revalidated—is fine political thinking.

An application of it would nicely apply to fiscal policy. Why not, "After five years, the last tax increase expires, unless it is voted back in by Congress"? Another way to make sound policy, also attractive, would be: "Every five years, tax rates will be lowered uniformly by 1 per cent." Those who have been paying 39 will now pay 38; those paying 15 will now pay 14.

Does the Speaker hear us? We think we are hearing his voice saying, *See you for every five years, raise you to every two years.*

But he is talking about after the election, we must suppose. □

One Day After The Four-Hour TV

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 22

Much attention is given to the hero's welcome given by the United Nations General Assembly to President Clinton when he showed up there on Monday even as the TV-world was seeing him in mortal combat with such questions as, Where exactly had he fondled the 21-year-old intern? Only in America. The rousing reception at the UN was predictable, a congregation of world leaders many of them enmeshed in scandal and ideology. Arafat got an ovation. So did Fidel Castro. In his first visit Khrushchev got an enormous hand, though not quite as sustained as Clinton's, in part because in those days (1959) there was some sentiment in America for cutting the mooring lines and letting the UN float out into the ocean.

But the instinct is familiar. Movie audiences tend to cheer when the Wild Ones or the Sundance Kid or Bonnie and Clyde overrun the boring people whose pedestrian job it is to keep banks from being robbed. Is it imaginable that Mao Tse-tung himself would have got less than a huge ovation if he had appeared in 1971 to claim his seat at the UN, perhaps a week after officially disclosing that there were ten million victims of his Cultural Revolution? In part the emotion of the day was solidarity with a fallen leader. In part it was our old friend, anti-American animus. If it hurts the U.S., the UN loves it. In days gone by the UN tended to focus its anti-Americanism in votes against Israel and sympathetic votes in the direction of Soviet policy. One wonders if the applause meter would have gone yet higher if Clinton's speech had coincided with testimony that he had raped the girl, not merely seduced her.

Since humor can be got from everything, Al Franken, presiding over an episode of the sitcom *Lateline*, amused himself by leaving the image on while Clinton testified but with the sound off, so that he could attend to manifold duties during the busy morning at the studio. Every five minutes or so he would pause to say, "He's doing excellently, don't you think?" Perfect commentary, for when you can't hear what Clinton is saying. The planted axiom, not eccentric by any means, was: The President is cornered, therefore whatever he says, I'm for him.

It seemed a terrible mistake for the House Republicans to encourage the public viewing. Granted all the evasions of the witness, the tenacity of the interrogators became incomprehensible. What on earth did they have in mind, bringing up the cigar business? If the objective was (as everyone agreed) merely to demonstrate for the purpose of people who can't read that Clinton really pretends to believe that he did not engage in "sexual relations" with the girl, surely that could have been done in a pictorial that consumed less time than *Gone with the Wind*? The incomparable Murray Kempton, reviewing the Army/McCarthy hearings a generation ago, wrote in his column on the 35th day of nonstop television coverage, "May God forgive me, I ended the day feeling sorry for Roy Cohn." That impulse—to feel sorry for the defendant whatever his crimes—magnifies with the office the defendant holds (unless he is a corporation executive, in which case forget the above). The governing rule is, The bigger they come, the harder they fall. Clinton was scraping bottom and had only to rise from the buoyancy generated by his degradation.

It is very sad, and wonderfully revealing about America. It is required, at this point, to focus on what happened. Not on the jacobinical flavor of the proceeding at the White House on August 17 but on the gritty offensiveness of what Clinton did, and how he maneuvered after doing what he did. A liberal columnist writing in the *New York Post* broke free of the bonds of ideological fraternity and, after surveying the record, wrote on Tuesday about the testimony, "You can see a President being harassed about his private life, or a President lying well but revealing himself as a cheat, sneak, cad, double-talker, and user." But the time off to recover is for the House of Representatives, which now needs, among all the other things, to persuade itself that its misreckoning should not alter the case for impeaching a President who lies under oath. □

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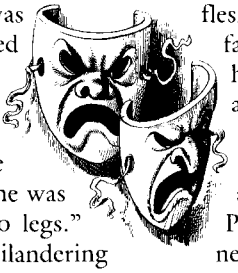
THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER

FLORENCE KING

FINDING my inner First Lady is easy: Mrs. Warren Harding's maiden name was Florence Kling. When Carl S. Anthony's biography of her came out this year I vowed to read it purely for pleasure so as not to be distracted by the underlining and note-taking of reviewing, but I found so many parallels between the Hardings and the Clintons that my four-color pencil ran out of lead.

Flossie Kling's strident Midwestern accent was never more pronounced than when she barked "Wurrn!," though later on when he was President she carefully purred "my husband." Five years his senior, she was a frumpy girl with the strongest jaw in Marion, Ohio, and, said the daughter of her beautician, "she was self-conscious about her piano legs." Thirty when she wed the philandering 25-year-old Harding, she hid what at first were imaginary throat wrinkles and later real ones with a black-velvet neck band. It would become her trademark.



Politically she was a solid Ohio Republican but her instincts were feminist. "I never wore a wedding ring," she told the press. "I don't like badges. And perhaps it's just a crotchet of a woman who knows women's province but insists on having a personality. . . . I do not like to cook. I hate fussing with food. . . . I'd rather go hungry than broil a steak or boil potatoes. I love business."

Her physical and domestic shortcomings did not bother her husband. "Some men choose women to marry because of sexual passion, others for social prestige, still others for money, but Warren recognized that with Florence he could create a superb partnership. He could count on her." And Florence, despite her occasional insecurities, knew it: "If she could never entirely control him, she continued to boss him with the confidence exhibited only by the sort of wife who knows her husband will never leave her."

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Warren came from a close-knit doctor's family whose happiness was marred when his mother was accused of medical manslaughter. Trained in homeopathy, Phoebe Harding acted as her husband's assistant, mixing potions and dosing his patients, one of whom died when her pepsin concoction was found to contain arsenic. She was acquitted on the testimony of Dr. Charles Sawyer, whom her grateful son would one day name White House physician.

The other Harding family scandal was Warren's insatiable appetite for female flesh. His transitory hits included farmers' daughters, sporting-house girlies, and maids, but he also seduced Florence's childhood friend, carried on with the widow next door, and had a 14-year affair with Carrie Phillips, wife of a Marion businessman.

Stimulated by risk, he made love to Carrie on the Phillips's kitchen table, in the yard, and, when the two couples sailed to Europe together, on the deck a few feet from Florence's cabin. He also left a paper trail. "Warren's recklessness in writing love letters seems at times almost pathological, as if he were secretly hoping to be destroyed by them." One particularly steamy letter to Carrie was written on Easter Sunday while Florence dressed for church.

When he was elected U.S. Senator in 1916 he wrote to Carrie on Senate letterhead and made love to his secretary, Grace Cross, who later tried to blackmail him, telling his go-between, "I can describe a birthmark on his back." Meanwhile, he was being stalked by twenty-year-old Nan Britton, a Marion doctor's daughter. Known as "a very nervy person," Nan told everyone in town that she had a crush on him and asked him to get her a job in New York.

Their daughter was born in 1919 but Nan refused to give the baby up for adoption and hinted instead at marriage, eliciting from Warren the same vague promise he had given Carrie: he might be alone in the future, given "the probability of Mrs. Harding's death in advance of his own." Nervy Nan later visited him in the White House. In her 1931 book, *The President's Daughter*, she revealed that they had "a tryst in a large closet, the sitting room actually, adjacent to the Oval Office."

At the 1920 GOP convention a pol said of Florence: "No step was taken without consulting her, and her advice was rarely, if ever, ignored." A reporter wrote: "If Warren G. Harding is elected there will be two p— well, *personalities* in the White House."

FLORENCE adored show-business people and had her own Barbra Streisand in Fanny Brice, who called her plastic surgery "getting my nose back to normalcy." Evalyn Walsh McLean, owner of the Hope Diamond, became such fast friends with Florence that rumors of lesbianism flew. Also on tap were Madame Marcia, Washington's leading clairvoyant, and Dr. Charles Sawyer, the Harding Administration's answer to William Ginsburg, who so craved attention that he told a reporter the President had three testicles.

And then there are the unreleased medical records. Harding had two nervous breakdowns, one in 1889 and another shortly after his marriage in 1893, but no details are known. He died on a trip to Alaska, where his lassitude lifted only once, when he asked, "How do the bull seals control their extensive harems?" His heart attack was misdiagnosed by Dr. Sawyer but a young Navy physician had seen it coming and later wrote: "He played too many holes [of golf] on a single outing when under great mental strain and pressure of official responsibility," and "He loved to play cards and there were times when doing so, he lost too much needed sleep."

The haunting similarities between Florence and Hillary are overridden by one huge difference. Florence was given to bluff raillery and had a "Hiya, boys, have a drink" manner that put men at ease, a quality Harding captured in his touching tribute, "She's the best pal a fellow ever had."

The difference between the two Presidents is found in the poem Warren wrote to Carrie Phillips: "I love your knees, their dimples kiss/I love your ways of giving bliss/I love your poise of perfect thighs/When they hold me in paradise."

It's not Keats but it's normal. □

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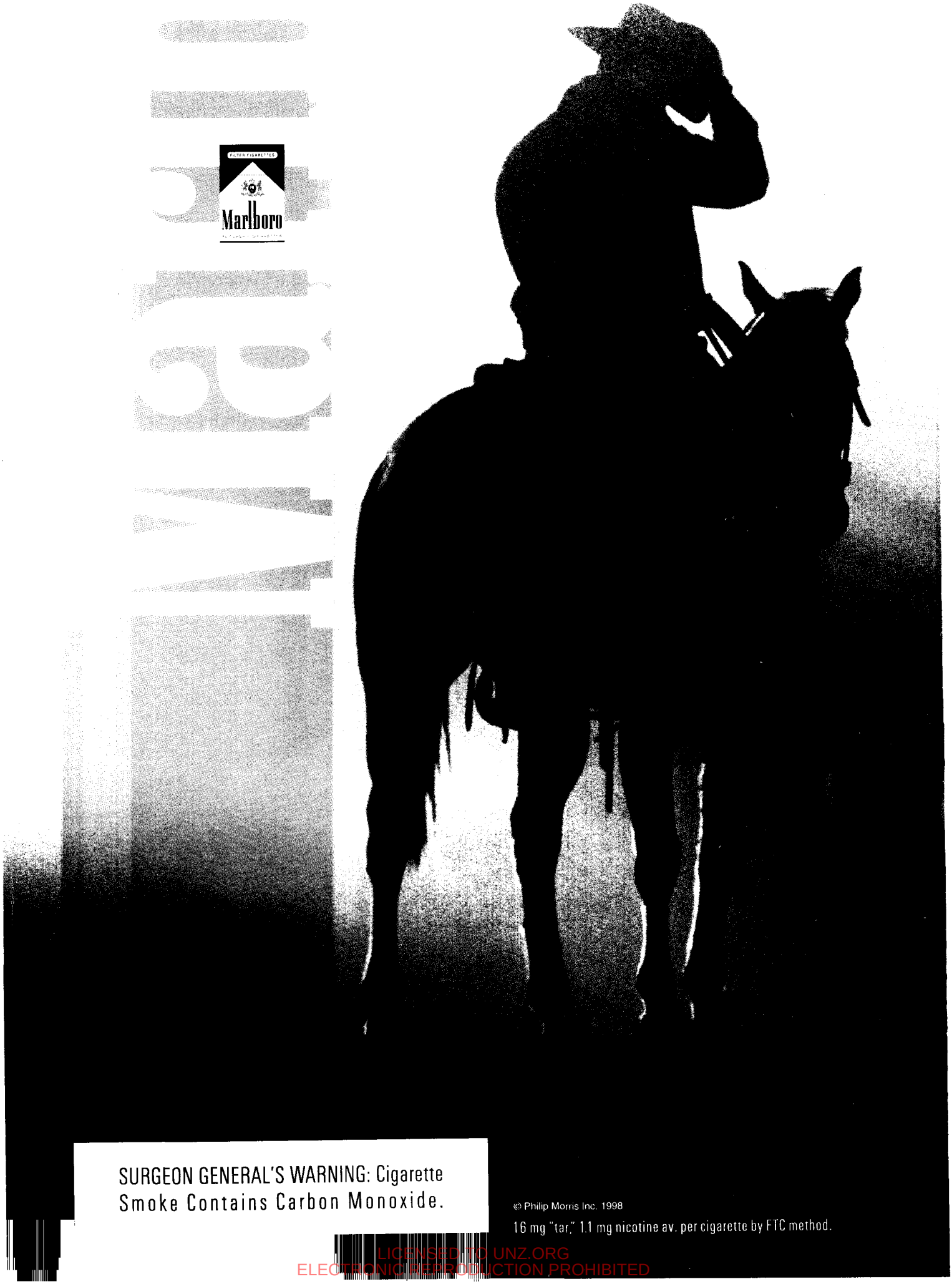
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